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Max-Pol Fouchet

The Night Evita Died

A Latin-American Episode

"THIS way, *caballeros*!" All four of us followed the yellowish silhouette as it led us down passage-ways grown shadowy in the fading daylight. HOTEL INTERNACIONAL. So, in tall capitals, the hotel proclaimed itself from the whitewash of the walls. In a recess, beside a mosquito-net, an Indian was playing the *guitarron*, alone. We crossed the patio. A white dog was sprawled asleep on the cement floor of a dried-up fountain. A few turkeys took to flight. Hammocks strung between the pillars of the gallery made parenthetical gestures round the approaching night.

Our guide stopped before a door held fast by a horizontal bar. He heaved at it. The bar resisted. Then it sprang from the supports, and the door swung open to reveal a cavity at the rear of which a grating quartered the twilight. In the hissing jet of an acetylene lamp, the walls wavered. They were exhibited to us by a plump hand, further extended by an emphatic *sombrero*: "This is the room." The *sombrero* settled itself back on a head from which it was manifestly loath to be separated. "The room where General Anastasio Fuentès lived during the revolution." Which revolution? Bolivia had had at least fifty revolutions in the past hundred years. We did not press the point. We weighed the full honour accorded us in our being lodged here, within these historic precincts, an honour felt all the more keenly in that we had at last found shelter for the night. The man went through the motions of shouldering a rifle. "Boom! Boom!" The general had been shot.

Army beds, their gaunt frames half-concealed by an ancient blanket and a barrack-room bolster, reared like canoes on the hummocky floor. And that is just what we were: shipwrecked mariners. The DC6 "Conquistador" of Braniff Airways, which had set out seven hours earlier from Saõ Paolo for Lima, had run into "engine trouble." After the monotony of the Brazilian hinterland, we were waiting for the Andes to begin, when a little girl pointed to the dead propellor. The second of the port engines had stopped. We were already flying at a great height. Abysses and saw-toothed crags skimmed past. The aircraft, shuddering all over, seemed to have been thrust back by the crests on the horizon. Another engine spluttered. It was no longer a question of our crossing the Cordilleras, even at a limp, but of making for the nearest landing ground. We were losing height; and the bristling earth, at each of our wide circles, climbed nearer.

We followed a valley which fitted in with our line of descent. Some sixty miles further on, the Bolivians had built a military airstrip, while they were fighting in the Chaco against the armies of Paraguay. It was too short to take anything more than fighters and the DC3's which maintained the service between the nearby town and La Paz. But we had no choice. The "Conquistador" touched down on a strip of concrete, braked in the long grass, and came to a standstill ten yards from a clump of eucalyptus. Forty passengers,

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tourists and businessmen, found they had landed at a small city in eastern Bolivia. Quarters were procured first for the women and children, then for the married couples. The four bachelors on board were taken to the *Hotel Internacional*, the only remaining one in Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

IN THIS way a Brazilian, a Belgian, a Swiss, and a Frenchman found themselves brought together by the vexation of the delay and the boredom of having to pass a day or more in this remote spot until the aircraft had been repaired, or another one sent to fetch them. Senhor Ribeiro had left Rio on his way to a technical schools' congress in Peru. The Belgian, Baron Bitourle, was engaged in investing the capital of a Congo bank in various Latin American enterprises. Dr. Schrecker, of Zürich, was on a mission to the big landed proprietors of the Andes regions to extol the virtues of Swiss fertilisers. I was going to look at the Indians; I was the dilettante. The acetylene lamp hissed its acrid blue flame. A blonde waved a bottle of coca-cola on the wall. The mosquitoes feasted on our ankles.

Two boys presently arrived with some empty tins and a jug. They lifted each bed, placed the tin containers under the feet, and filled them with water: primitive moats against bugs, cockroaches, and tarantulas. They then armed themselves with sticks and carried out a minute examination of all the walls; in every hole, crack, and cranny of the dirty plaster, they dug, picked, and probed. They next scrutinised the ceiling, in an all-out hunt for scorpions. One of these creatures was espied, motionless, asleep. The two urchins scrambled on to the nearest bed, leaving their footprints all over the blanket. They struck out at the enemy, which fell with a noise of castanets. We watched it struggling on its back, threshing the air. Senhor Ribeiro crushed it, and a greenish matter spread round his shoe.

We went out, determined not to return to General Anastasio Fuentès' room until we were dropping with fatigue. The owner of the *Internacional* greeted us. "Going for a walk? O.K. O.K. Santa Cruz is a paradise. The pearl of the east."

The main square consisted of trodden earth with a square of bitumen in the middle, small shrubs growing through it. In the centre of this raft, a bronze head on a plinth kept watch over the sleep of peons stretched out on the side-walk, rolled like cigars in some brown material, with a ragged straw hat to cover their faces. A few shoe-shine boys lay in wait for the boots and shoes of passers-by; they would have made a fortune, with all that mud about, if most of the feet had not been bare. Through the open doors of a church, a muted mumble of voices reached us. Their heads shrouded in black shawls, the women kneeled as soon as they reached the brick-paved parvis, shuffled on their knees up to the edifice, and crossed themselves with the gesture of scratching. The church-bell rang, and its hoarse note brought lizards out of a bell-tower that earthquakes had left all awry.

We tried to walk as much as possible under the arcades, so as to avoid the clinging mud. Men stood about with heavy inertia in idle groups, one of them invariably slumped against a column or pillar. The children remained motionless, with arms dangling, perhaps awaiting the evening meal of which sputtering frying-pan smells gave forewarning. People and things alike were caught in a strange suspense, a curious passivity.... We left the main square behind us. The houses were poor. Waste fluids drained from apertures pierced at the base of the walls, and ran towards the centre of the street, carrying the household refuse with them. A central stream furrowed its way into the mud. Carts ploughed and churned it up: for wheels, they had two large discs of solid wood. Bullocks floundered and slithered in the thick sludge, drawing these vehicles in which whole families nodded and drowsed. Rough-hewn, yet not unelegant, the carts were setting off towards the remote haciendas in the hills. Horsemen galloped past them, bent above their small lively horses, with pistols at their saddle-bows and rifles slung across their backs, as if armed for war. A profusion of

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dwarf cacti clung to the roof slates, covering them with a shaggy pelt. Bits of old packing-case, nailed end to end, held aloft the telegraph wires, from which hung torn fragments of paper streamers, vestiges of former festivities. On top of these poles, an occasional vulture perched in silhouette against the sky.

THE whisky served at the *Hotel Internacional* was petrol of Chilean origin. It had to be frozen to the point where the tongue was anæsthetised. We asked for ice. We were brought a few cubes swimming in the brown-stained residue of their own liquefaction. Dr. Schrecker, who had just washed his hands in eau-de-Cologne, picked one up between thumb and forefinger, peered and gazed at it as if examining a crystal in his Zürich laboratory, then hurled it into a corner like Luther hurling his inkwell at the spot on the wall where the Evil One had appeared. "There's a fly in it!" he exclaimed. Senhor Ribeiro shrugged his shoulders: it was still ice. M. Schrecker, having wiped the mist from his spectacles, picked up a second ice-cube, scrutinised it, put it down again. "No fly this time. Something worse. There's dirt in it. In Santa Cruz, they make ice with dirty water." The Brazilian came to the defence. Did this ice function as ice, yes or no? If it did, what more did one want? "But don't you know," the Swiss doctor went on, "that cold has very little effect on amoebae? . . ." Senhor Ribeiro smiled: Latin America got along perfectly happily with its amoebae. He himself was already gulping the whisky. We followed his example. "You're swallowing a concentrated culture of germs, gentlemen," said Dr. Schrecker. He got up and made for the kitchen. When he came back, he was carrying a large empty jam jar. In this he placed his glass. There was a space between the inner and outer surfaces, and this he filled with ice and iced water. Then he twirled his glass round as if in an ice-pail. One had a vision of all the watches and clocks in the Swiss Federation ticking round in unison. "That's real precision engineering," said the Brazilian. Dr. Schrecker thanked him.

With or without amoebae, the Chilean whisky was drunk. We began to feel fine. It seemed to us that the *Hotel Internacional* was a comfortable hotel, that Santa Cruz was a happy city, that the breakdown of the "Conquistador" was a happy accident. We couldn't let the evening end like that. What about paying a visit to the little ladies, suggested the school-teacher from Rio. Baron Bitourle corrected him: there might perhaps be a night-club in the town, with rumba dancers. Of course, he didn't dance anything but fox-trots and waltzes himself, but he had nothing against exotic rhythms: it wasn't a bad idea to go slumming occasionally. "Well, we've gone this far," sighed Dr. Schrecker. But would we be able to find a night-club in Santa Cruz? Certainly, answered Ribeiro. And with a wink for my benefit, he added: "Perhaps even with French girls, who knows?"

"Why with French girls?" enquired Dr. Schrecker. He had not realised that the word *"francesita,"* in Latin America, is the term for a prostitute. He was duly informed. French artisanry was having its revenge over Swiss technology.

THE hotel-keeper crossed himself with his fingernail, first on the forehead, then on the lips, then over the chest hairs protruding through his shirt. These three gestures were then summed up in a larger motion of crossing himself. After this mystical addition, the hotel-keeper apologised. No, he did not know of any such place. He doubted whether such places existed in Santa Cruz, or whether they would be worthy of *caballeros*. It was a devout town, a patriotic town. The ladies were renowned for their beauty and their jealous temperament. They could use a knife, a *machete*, or a pistol. One of them had only recently dashed her unfaithful husband's brains out with a silver crucifix; a stirring moral example. Alfonso, on the other hand, might perhaps know where the *caballeros* could amuse themselves. Who was Alfonso? The driver of "the" taxi. What taxi? The municipal taxi. A cultivated man, *muy fino*, his job took him more or less everywhere.

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The boy was sent out to look for Alfonso. A series of explosions presently announced that both vehicle and driver had arrived.

Alfonso came in holding the steering wheel. He was in the habit of removing it, he explained, as a precaution, so that the urchins in the square shouldn't invade his driving seat to play at being gangsters. There didn't seem to be any flies on Alfonso. A night-club? *Claro!* Certainly there was one. And highly respectable. Alfonso often took foreigners there. Or widowers. The *caballeros* would have a most agreeable evening. All perfectly proper. Delighted, M. Bitourle stood up. Dr. Schrecker, reassured, followed him. The Brazilian and I brought up the rear.

By the rear door of the municipal taxi, one climbed into a wooden box, above which was a canopy on metal supports; inside the box, two benches had been fixed on either side, running parallel with the chassis. Down the centre of the car ran a long, low table. "That's for the coffins, but you can sit on it," commented Alfonso. "I've got a monopoly on the dead. They're my best customers. I take them to the cathedral, with their families. Not just those from the town. Those out in the country, too, I go miles to fetch them." He screwed the steering wheel back into place. "Baptisms, I go in for them as well. At the same price. The destination's the same. I fasten the child's cradle or basket there, where the coffins go.... The peasants often bring their children in on horseback, with the mother up behind. But you can't do that with the dead, they're too heavy. So they have to call for Alfonso. Alfonso's always ready. Long live us all!"

The steering wheel in position, Alfonso started off. *"Vamos!"* The old Dodge skidded in the mud, then extricated its tyres one by one, and we set out, slithering and back-firing like a machine-gun in a civil war.

The houses became more and more widely spaced. The inter-sections ceased to be lit by naked bulbs swinging at the end of their wire in a halo of nocturnal insects. Soon the walls broke off. The single headlamp, in passing, ignited a vein of trees in the mine of the night.

"WHERE are you taking us, Alfonso?" we asked. He replied: "I know. Driving the living and the dead is my job. We're not going to church, don't you worry." The funeral and baptismal Dodge, driven on by the deflagrations of its engine, leapt from pothole to bump like a grasshopper. "Where are we, Alfonso?" "On the plains, *caballeros*." "Where are we going?" "A long way. To a good time." He let go of the steering wheel, lifted his arms, and waved his hands: "Long live us all!" We clung on to the coffin table. He avoided a rut only to bounce over a stone. The canopy cracked like a whip overhead. We were no longer ourselves. We had left four dummies behind in Santa Cruz. Left their clothes, their titles, their functions, their past, all neatly packed in suitcases, behind the walls where General Fuentès once held office, very far behind. We had abandoned our very names. Now only our Christian names remained. Jacintho, Bernhardt, Eugène.... And they weighed so little it was as if we had just been given them. "Are we nearly there, Alfonso?" "There it is, where you can see the small light, *caballeros*." And we pulled up. The Dodge broke its heart in the obscurity. He helped us down and pointed to an almost ruined farmhouse. *"La Casa de las Delicias."*

In the outer room, an old woman sat. Her nose was buried in her shawl and her bare, skinny feet were crossed, as if nailed to the chair rail, feet from a Grünewald painting, and she did not stir; one of her eyelids opened, disclosing the hard, cruel eye of a hen. To the right, stretched out on a piece of matting, was another old woman, even more aged and gaunt, naked under the rags that covered her old bones. Was she on the point of death? Or of resurrection? Her beads in her fingers, she prayed, not seeing us. The candle illuminated an image of the Virgin of Cures. No one greeted us. We were alone between these two emaciated, gate-keeping conventuals. One had fallen asleep. The other shivered, eye-sockets sunken with fever.

Hoarse breathing of men. Laughter of women. A curse, a sigh, an exclamation.

On either side of the old women, curtains

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attached to the rafters hung down to the ground. They barely stirred. Strange sailing ship, where we were received by ghosts. Behind these hangings, lamps were burning; they turned the cloth into a screen upon which, almost at floor level, shadows rhythmically rose and fell. Tentacles stretched out, unfurled and ran over the pale surfaces, climbed upwards, fell back again. An undulation dissevered an opaque form. One could make out the roundness of a head, the swelling of a rump, thick legs, a straighter, slimmer figure slipping into a sack. Immersed in the milky glow, the shadows talked. A drapery was raised. A man and a woman appeared, emerging out of the mist. The man was buttoning up his shirt. The woman was wearing a short shift, her breasts naked. She slipped into her shoulder straps, and folded her plump arms over her chest. She accompanied the man to the door. *"Adios,"* said the man. *"Adios,"* said the woman. *"Gracias."* A horse cantered off. The hoofbeats faded away like a dying fire.

"The *señorita* is free," announced Alfonso. "So is the room." Alfonso gestured towards the hangings. These were the walls that divided up the *Casa de las Delicias*. Between these translucent and much-mended partitions, day and night, several women assuaged the solitary drovers, the casual labourers hired for the harvest, the passing horsemen. Each cubicle had the spectacle of neighbouring shadows at their convulsions, of spiders devouring their prey. "The *señorita* does not please the *caballeros*? Patience. The other ladies will soon be finished." The sound of a smack, a cry, a loud guffaw came through the hangings. The girl who was "free" waited, head lowered, hands clasped on swollen belly. Ribeiro went up to her and took her by the waist. She was called Dolorès. "Any chance of something to drink?" asked Baron Bitourle. The girl smiled. *"Si señor."* She shook the old woman asleep on her chair: *"Mama, Mama!"* The old woman opened her eyes: "Give the gentlemen something to drink, *mamita*." "What is there to drink?" Schrecker enquired anxiously. *"Cerveza,"* mumbled the old woman. Beer. Only beer. We were led out into a courtyard, behind the house. Dolorès came with us.

A HORSE whinnied a few paces away. From a corner came the stench of a manure heap: that was where the customers went to urinate after making love. We seated ourselves on benches round a lamp, in whose flickering flame the rectangle of the table seemed to float. Our faces, in this light, were sharpened by deep shadows and gleaming prominences, hollowed and highlighted. Now we had only masks on which were stamped spurious likenesses. The skin under the shadows. The flame on the bones. The old woman brought bottles of beer. Dolorès, her breasts hanging slack, poured. Schrecker wiped his glass. Bitourle smoked. While the girl was filling the glasses, Ribeiro stroked her buttocks. She sat down again. Her lips opened to disclose widely-spaced teeth smeared with rouge: *"Salud!"* Ribeiro added: *"Salud, amor y pesetas!"* Alfonso completed the time-honoured phrase! *"... y tiempo para gustarlos!"* Health, love, and money, and time to enjoy them.

Another girl joined us. Concepción. More Indian than the others. And thick-set, too, but attractive enough, a face with eyes devoid of expression and with heavy black plaits. She was still moist; with her own sweat was mingled the sweat of her *"amigos"* of the night. Schrecker watched her. She was a great one for talking. Where do the strangers come from? From France. She knows: France is in Europe, where there's always war. Belgium? She'd never heard of it. Next to France, we tell her. She laughs. She thought that France was a continent. Switzerland did not interest her. On the other hand, she liked Schrecker. With her brown hand she stroked the doctor's pink cheeks and fair hair, while the latter kept saying in a plaintive voice: *"No, no, no."* Ribeiro was having fun with Dolorès. *"Ay, Jacintho! Ay, Jacintho!"* Concepción asked for a drink. The beer was lukewarm. Alfonso helped the old woman carry the bottles. Birds swished round overhead: *murcielagos*, the long-winged bats of South America. Moths cast their sombre palm-prints on the table.

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One of them spread its death's-head ocelli, closed up like a shrivelled leaf, then once more began its sinister winking. Dolorès crushed it with a smack of the hand. *"Al cielo!"* said Concepción. *"Al cielo!"* echoed Schrecker. *"Al cielo!"* exclaimed Bitourle. Jacintho laughed. Dolorès poured beer down his neck. A man crossed the courtyard. A third girl arrived, Agostina. For Bitourle. Alfonso was singing.

It was late. The customers had gone. Now there were nine of us round the table. Dolorès, Concepción, Agostina, and Asuncion, the latest arrival. The four of us. Plus Alfonso. "Don't the *caballeros* want to do anything else but drink?" "That's all," Schrecker hastened to reply. The girls are too ugly, was the reason given by Bitourle. There was no doubt of that: their charms had fled. Concepción alone was not yet worn out, dulled with exhaustion. The doctor gave her little furtive pecking kisses. He told her about his children who were growing up in some alpine *pension*, and about Zürich, where the women make the men go to bed at eleven at night. *"Que barbaridad!"* wailed Concepción. *"Pobrecito!"* And there, in Bolivia, near Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Dr. Bernhardt Schrecker, of the Swiss Chemical Fertiliser Company, suddenly became the *pobrecito*, the "poor little one," a martyr to the *Frauenverein*, while Alfonso captured moths under an upturned glass. The Indian girl pointed to an imprisoned insect: "Bernardo in Switzerland!" Then she lifted the glass. The moth, almost suffocated, did not fly away, but crawled round the table in a circle, barely fluttering its wings. *"Pobrecito!"* Although his desire was aroused, Dr. Schrecker refused to go behind the linen walls with Concepción. "No," he said, "I won't go." Concepción took the Swiss by the hand, and placed his hand on her breasts. She kissed him, undid his buttons. Schrecker went scarlet in the face. The woman laughed. She imprisoned the moth once more under the glass. *"Maricon!"* she cried. Pederast! *"Maricon! Maricon! Maricon!"* The four women beat the word out together. "No, no," protested Schrecker. He pulled out the photo of his wife and children. Let him rather show them whether he had any *cojones*! Schrecker apologised to us. He felt he had to apologise to someone. *"Viva el pobrecito!"* the four women were now bawling. Schrecker handed dollars round to them.

Ribeiro emerged from the farmhouse, dancing on one leg and then on the other. "What a man!" said Dolorès. "And believe me, it didn't cost me a *cruzeiro*," said Ribeiro. Baron Bitourle envied him. Alfonso was waiting for his tip. The night grew bluer.

WE HAD not heard either the shout or the hoof-beats. A man stood before us, legs apart, hands thrust into the pockets of a leather jacket. A narrow, black moustache. Eyes staring straight ahead. Traces of smallpox accentuated the aggressiveness of his expression. A man of the saddle and the sudden foray. Of civil war and plunder. A man with a lively destiny.

"Luis!" exclaimed Dolorès. She ran up to him. The other women applauded. Luis! Luis! Obviously a well-known character about the place. Perhaps he even made money out of it. Joyful and submissive, the women now had no thought for anyone else but this lean black cat who had suddenly materialised from some gutter or other. Luis came up to the table, leaned on it with both arms, and with a far-away look in his eyes announced: "She's dead."

The girls had fallen silent. Concepción slowly lowered the glass she had raised in Luis's honour. Schrecker, Ribeiro, Bitourle, and I waited for the man to give an explanation. "She's dead," he repeated. "I was in Tio Pépé's café. With my brother. Pépé turned the knob on the radio. Then the radio said it: the *señora* is dead."

Luis crossed himself on the forehead, mouth, and chest. The girls did the same. Concepción kissed a small iron crucifix hanging from her neck. Agostina's breasts heaved with heavy sobs. "*Ay*, Lord, why did you take her? *Ay*, Lord. The poor thing! Our mother!" Breasts, bellies, thighs all shook under the transparent shifts. A grief deep in flesh and

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bone. Luis struck the table. "The *señora* Evita died with all the sacraments of the Church. They've asked His Holiness the Pope to make her a saint. The radio said so!" Agostina struggled for breath. The Belgian tried to comfort her. The girl shouted: "It was the *Yanquis* that killed her!" Luis nodded agreement. He was looking menacingly at the Swiss, whom he no doubt took to be a North American. "The *Yanquis* killed her! *Los capitalistas Yanquis*," shouted Dolorès. *"Los chingados!"* The *señora* Evita, like her husband, was the friend of the people. They wanted to make the Argentinians happy, but they wanted to make the Bolivians happy as well. *Claro!* They were the friends of Bolivia! The rich had sided with the Americans. "Death to the *Yanquis*!" Luis threatened Schrecker. Ribeiro had to intervene: our friend was not a Yanqui, he was Swiss, we were all Latins here. Dr. Schrecker, pale-faced, acknowledged his Latinity. "The *señora* Evita Peron died of cancer," he stammered. Luis turned his fury against the bottles. He swept away those in front of him. The rest he hurled into the yard. The horse took fright. Its whinneyings blended with the general lamentation. Dolorès roamed round the table, stamping the earth with her bare feet.

In their shifts, their heads covered with rags, the girls knelt in the outer room. Next to the image of the Virgin, Luis pinned up a picture of Evita Peron taken from an old magazine. The candle lit up the two images. The girls prayed, their faces oily with tears. "Holy Virgin, have pity on us! Saint Evita, pray for us!" The woman politician in the colour-print was laughing, blonde and worldly-wise, sophisticated and vulgar. *"Tan guapa,"* exclaimed Luis. *"Tan guapa, tan linda,"* echoed the choir. So *chic*, so beautiful. The litanies started up again: *"Santa Virgen, Santa Evita."* Luis beat his forehead against the wall. Behind him, the four women tirelessly kept time with swaying torsos. The *mamita* was praying on her chair, the other old woman on her pallet. The shadows grew monstrous on the eddying linen partitions. . . .

Now, all that remained of Santa Cruz de la Sierra was a patch of brown earth on the green of the plain, with dirty rooftops and glinting puddles. We were flying over the square. Women would be shuffling on their knees into the cathedral, to pray for Evita, to pray to Evita. The owner of the *Hotel Internacional*, standing on his doorstep facing the square, was no doubt once more counting over the money the strangers had left, and talking politics with Luis: General Fuentès had lived in the room where the scorpions were, and one day, when he left the room, the rebels had shot him down in the patio, on the spot where the white dog sleeps. Carts were churning up the mud of the streets. That car travelling along the road through the fields was perhaps the taxi of baptism and death. . . .

Already the Andes were coming into view.

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I. A. Richards

Some Recollections of C. K. Ogden

CHARLES KAY OGDEN first appeared to me at a lunch in Magdalene to which my Director of Studies, F. R. Saler, had asked me as a freshman in trouble: I had found myself, after a term or so of history, possessed by some heartfelt objection to reading any more of it and was begging to be allowed to try something else. The other guest was a small commanding undergraduate also of Magdalene with a large pale head and disconcerting glasses. He was some three years older than myself and ready to discourse all through the afternoon out of preternatural knowledge, and in a beautiful and tireless voice, on The Choice of Subject. Our host left us early to play tennis, and I listened on and on to what the leading lecturers in almost every field would soon be telling me if I did not take due care. "Will you change your mind, if I convince you?" used to be one of Ogden's openings. I suppose I was convinced. (Later we came to count together the number of convictions in a philosopher's record.) At least, I let him lead me off to his attic in the Pepys Building and provide me with books which could, he said, ease a beginner's steps into Moral Science. I still feel at times that I would have done well to have read them.

"Ogden, what do you do with all these books? Do you read them?" This was the searching question put by the Master, S. A. Donaldson, as he threaded his way through the accumulations in that attic. The strange thing is that a just answer could have been: "On the whole, yes!" If you looked closely you would find that many of them held many slips of paper with annotations and that in the margins were Ogden's peculiar, minutely pencilled indications. He had a clairvoyant's knack of opening any book at the page most relevant to one of his polymathic purposes. But this I only learnt after my next serious meeting with him, over six years later.

That meeting can be dated to a minute. At noon on 11th November, 1918, an excited Frenchman leapt off his cycle in Kings Parade and cried: "They told me the War was over! But look!" A grand piano came crashing out through the plate glass window of Ogden's Cambridge Magazine Book Shop and Art Gallery. As we watched, another followed. Medical students, flown with the spirits of the occasion, were smashing it up. This looked, and was, rather dangerous; but there was Ogden standing in the next doorway calmly watching the assailants. He was chewing his lips a little and pressing the corner of his eye with his finger-tip—a trick he had for improving the acuity of his vision. I joined him, though I was largely in the dark, along with most other people, as to what was happening.

At that time I rented a room from him above one of his shops, at 1 Free School Lane, and knew him only remotely as my landlord. About midnight, he came in to ask whether I could identify any of the rioters, if need be, to help him with his action for damages against the town, and told me the story. He had founded his *Cambridge Magazine*, a penny University Weekly, astonishingly successful from the start, against all advice. But

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there was in him—behind all his freaks and humours—a central clarifying insistence, a flame of curiosity and impatience, a disdain for the acquiescences of sloth, a trust in mind which, even as an undergraduate, made him one of the forces of his time. That was why, with none of the traditional advantages, he had nearly all the great—from Hardy round to Shaw—generously ready to write for him. It was most encouraging. But when he proposed to go on from journalism into the book business, he had been warned that he must give up, if so, all academic ambitions. With the War the *Cambridge Magazine* had developed a review of the foreign press and soared up to a circulation of some 25,000. It was invaluable to the Foreign Office, and to would-be informed opinion, but naturally became, of course, a target for the Blimps of those days who did their best to shoot it down with paper-rationing. Hence the multiple *Cambridge Magazine* Book Shops to provide sorting space in which Ogden could skim the cream from bulk purchases of pulp-worthy books. He would sort books for hours—from 1.00 a.m. on—after his day's work. Overheard from the foot of a ladder during one such sorting session: "It's long since I perused a volume. Must stop this soon! Must stop this soon!" Over the rest of his paper-supply measures, mystery had to hang.

To all this and to all Ogden's current hopes and endeavours the day's doings had been the death-blow. He knew it; though why the blow had fallen was not at all clear. Ogden's style of comment could be free and stinging. How tell an opponent he doesn't know what he is talking about? Why not in verse?

The rise of Adam's Apple,
You fallen son of Eve,
Enables you to grapple
With things you can't conceive.

How report an inquest? "The Coroner found that the customers were not poisoned by Hawkins but by some fish." Too much of this sort of thing could lead to resentments which combined easily with impatience over discussion of War Aims.

After collecting my useless impressions of the rioters, Ogden started off for "Top Hole", his fantastically cluttered attic above MacFisheries in Petty Cury. Half-way down the tightly twisting stairs, under an aged gas jet, he stopped to make some remark upon a recent controversy in *Mind*. An hour or two later when we went on downstairs, the main outline of *The Meaning of Meaning* was clear enough, and plans for a joint Work to embody it were in being.

THE remark is attributed to Robert Hutchings: "When someone hands you a lemon, see if you can't make some lemonade." Acting in this spirit, Ogden, within a few weeks, had transformed his defunct *Cambridge Magazine* (it had thousands of subscribers to be taken care of) into a handsome Quarterly, its double columns so laid out that one page would hold type for four pages of our future Work. We wrote its first draft as a series of articles under various names, using for more experimental or frivolous passages Ogden's famous pseudonym "Adelyne More" (Add a Line More: I spell this out because I have met so many who claimed to be the only one or the first, to "detect the imposture." Ogden, it is true, took considerable pains to substantiate the fictive authoress of his *Fecundity versus Civilisation* with photos of a pretty secretary and of her military wedding: an arch of swords at the church door; I believe I dissuaded him from announcing triplets).

Work on the projected Work went on intermittently for some years, Ogden meanwhile becoming more and more centred in London, where he was organising his two great series: The International Library of Psychology, Philosophy, and Scientific Method and The History of Civilisation. To both he acted as General Editor. I have sometimes thought that the first of these may have been in part invented to serve as a reassuring frame for the unconventionalities of the *Meaning of Meaning*. Some of the most distinctive parts were earlier pieces that Ogden had had lying by him unfinished: one such was the "Word Magic" essay which appeared in fuller and more striking form in

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the *Cambridge Magazine* and had to be cut down for the book (with an apologetic promise of an independent volume—never, alas, to be written). Another was the terminal fable: "Realise thyself, Amoeba dear, said Will. . . ." As little by little we learned to understand (and write) one another's language, the book advanced. Much of it had to be written in the small hours after Ogden's arrival by the last train from London, and without cocoa I hardly think much would have resulted. He held the pen, on the ground that his hand was more legible to his typist than mine. And he sat while I walked up and down.

There were incessant interruptions: translation work on Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (without Ogden's energy and his enlistment of the young Frank Ramsay's talent there might well never have been any English version), on Vaihinger's *Als Ob*, on Jules Romain's *Eyeless Sight*, and scores of others. There was an option on the purchase of Stonehenge (Ogden could not easily believe that he could not find a very good use for it). There was the wind to raise by various means ever and again. In those days, Ogden suffered frequently from what he described as "hand-to-mouth disease"—what struck me was that his mouthfuls had to be somewhat large. One welcome interlude arose through a chance summer juncture with James Wood in Cambridge and produced *Foundations of Aesthetics*—much aided by an ozone machine whose sparks, Ogden averred, generated Brighton air in the Fens. Certainly at about 3.00 a.m., while Ogden, pen in hand, enacted the death of Sardanapalus on a vast, high day-bed and Wood did his Muller's exercises, the reek of seaweed (or Underground?) it emitted seemed to freshen up the argument.

THE chapter on Definition in the "Beadig of Beadig," as we came to call it in memory of a frustrating cold in the head, led us into long discussions of the number of radically different ways there may be of telling anyone what any word may mean. This inquiry was the germ of Basic English. Ogden had long been deep in the history and theory of universal languages, and it was no long step from our account of Definition to the notion of a minimal English capable of serving all purposes. We played with the construction of this for a little—I recall the excitement of the initial moves. But we decided that it would distract us and delay the completion of the Work. It was Ogden who was to be singly and wholly responsible for the devising in detail of Basic English with the invaluable aid, through years, of Miss L. W. Lockhart, author of *Word Economy*. His Word List and its Rules shrank and expanded for a while, like an accordion as his resourceful, prehensive, and reconciling intelligence explored one set of possibilities after another.

This preliminary work and the tedium of the actual devising in part explain the tenacity with which Ogden, after the promulgation of Basic English, resisted proposals for further development. But there were more practical reasons: he had to have a fixed and finished system once he had decided to promote it. Another man might have published a series of papers or a general treatise on the simplification of English; but Ogden had the ambition to found and direct a Movement and I had curtailed this for the concerns of the *Meaning of Meaning*.

In the final crystallisation of Basic English, Ogden's Magdalene By-fellowship played a decisive part. His countless commitments, of which no one but Ogden ever knew more than a fringe, kept him in London. But the By-fellowship gave him both a little respite from stress and the incentive to come out with something distinctive and substantial in return. Whatever the long-time verdicts may be, this at least can be said: with Basic English Ogden brought a sparkling stream of fresh thought into stables which have for thousands of years very badly needed cleansing. And he took important steps towards making techniques in language instruction join the general accumulative advance in design characteristic of our times. But this is of his work. In his life he was gay, tireless as Socrates, sympathetic, imaginative, and quick in help, if salt and astringent in comment and wary in counsel.

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Letter from Warsaw

Poland, Left of Centre

Taking Liberties with Socialism

POLAND, as we were brought up to say, belongs to the West. I remember once, as a bored school-child in Australia, trying to find out where the centre of Europe really was by drawing lines on an atlas from Iceland to the Caspian Sea and from the top of the Urals to the corner of Portugal. It probably comes out differently with every map you use, and anyway you have to make an adjustment because the area so delimited is not a rectangle: but the lines intersected, I remember, just east of Warsaw. Strictly speaking, as your train rolls into Warsaw from Berlin, you ought to be feeling that this is still central Europe, and a little left of centre at that.

The idea of Poland fascinates by its absolutism. It is the one country where the worst, the absolute worst and not just "the worst imaginable," has happened within easy memory of the youngest adults. I met a street-fighter of the Warsaw Rising, soon after I arrived, in a restaurant, and when he tried to explain to me what August 1944 was like he found to his surprise that he didn't know how. "Unless you had been there," he told me, "you wouldn't have believed it possible. I was there, and I didn't believe it myself." A certain notional horror still hangs over the flat, green, rather cheerful farmlands where the dawn rises, and the people who get in at Poznan, though presumably as breakfastless as yourself—it is three o'clock in the morning—are all too gay. The sight of Warsaw, all the same, is repellent enough. The first thing you see as you step out of the station is the 33-storey Palace of Culture and Sciences (PKN), a gift of the Soviet Union. This is as it should be, because you are going to spend the next three weeks learning that there are only two kinds of view in Warsaw: those in which you can see PKN and those in which you can't. The thing is not so much ugly as horrifyingly unlikely; every glimpse of it jars on whatever certainty you have of your own sanity. It is manic. You make little plots to stay out of its sight. You devise a way of getting from the Old Town to the British Embassy whereby, if you stay on the right pavement, you can go all the way without seeing it once—only to discover that, inexplicably, it doesn't work on the way back. A monstrous tapering cream finger, its tip dominates every skyline, and when you fly into Warsaw, or out of it, the city looks like a handful of huts sheltering in its shadow.

I foresee a dreadful future for this building. Some day, when the Red Army has gone for good, there will be hooligan bomb-outrages in the upper parts of the skyscraper, the pinnacle will be dismantled as an act of appeasement to popular opinion, the thing will look worse than ever as a stump, it will be pulled down (all but the spacious lower floors) along with the stone monoliths that guard the doors and the Stalinist inscription over the vast portal. And streets will be built around it, to hide the shame that survives, as there were streets until 1944. Meanwhile Stalin Square has been renamed Square of Parades and the Palace is the most joked-about building in the world.

There are even good jokes inside it. One finds it hard to pass the British Museum without thinking of Marx at work in the Reading Room, capitalism nurturing the seed of its own destruction in its holy-of-holies. But to put the offices of the student-weekly *Po Prostu* ("Straightforward") inside PKN was to show a flair for paradox you would hardly expect of bureaucracy. Socialism is hard at work at its own suicide on the seventeenth floor of Stalin's present to Poland, and in offices that look as slick and established as everything else in the Palace. It is the most famous journal in Eastern Europe, and everyone knows how its editor Lasota, now an M.P., led a delegation to Gomulka in October 1956 and gave him student support at a decisive moment. The journal has been pushing its neo-Marxism nearer and nearer to neo-liberalism

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ever since, but it is difficult, of course, to keep it up. Poles are now saying that *Po Prostu* is not as interesting as it used to be. You cannot always be as interesting as a revolutionary student journal at a moment like "the October turning-point" (the expression "October Revolution" is officially discouraged) when the Red Army advanced on Warsaw and then, as all Poland held its breath, stopped. The journal has had its moments since. In May, Gomulka rapped it over the knuckles for taking liberties and for excessive revisionism, and certainly the liberties it takes are hair-raising. It is the nearest thing to a liberal journal between Berlin and Vladivostok. The thirty-year-old graduates who run it strike attitudes—always in the name of "socialism"—against everything in the establishment except Gomulka and the Soviet connection: the Church, the Government, the Party, the official youth organisations. They proceed by audacity. "It's Time to Interfere," as one of their headlines puts in, and they specialise in rash interpretations and out-of-context quotations from the Leader's speeches: "Gomulka in his speech at the ZMS [Youth Organisation] Congress reminded us that one generation yields place to the next. Each generation takes advantage of the experience, success, and failure of the one before. He summoned youth to work hard and to interfere in every sphere of Polish life" (Jerzy Laski, *Po Prostu*, 12 May, 1957). They say what they like, and whatever it is they call it socialism. It is an insidious technique, and it is working. If young Poland can only keep it up, Moscow will one day have to choose between another massacre and the amputation of her Western provinces. And it is just possible (though we must not put it any higher) that amputation may seem cheaper.

AT THE foot of the Palace of Culture, in a big wooden shack called "Stodowa" (The Barn), a rhythm-group of engineering-students performs on Saturday and Sunday evenings. The hours are discreet; everything stops by eleven. There are, you learn with some disappointment, no hooligans. The gangs of youth who dared one another into pointless acts of violence seem to have disappeared in the last few months from the centre of Warsaw, and everyone is glad to see the end of them. In the Stodowa you simply have fun. As a foreigner, and a foreigner from the West, I was not allowed to pay for myself. They pushed me into the dance-hall and into a seat at a ringside table where, they said, Western journalists had actually appeared for a few minutes at a time to report the doings of the club in the Western press. The words "West" and "Western" are pronounced with a special emphasis by young Poles, as if in super-capital letters. A tepid bottle of sweet soda-water is put before you, an American girl of Polish extraction who is learning the ballet in Warsaw is suddenly produced from another table to talk English, your host tells you loudly that he has a brother in Edinburgh who escaped to Vienna under a train-seat, and the band starts to play. We watch. "It's sad, really," says the American girl, who is very pretty and has been explaining through the din that ice is not to be had anywhere in Warsaw except at the American Embassy. "They come here to try to forget the way they live." As the music quickens two girls jump on to the shoulders of their partners and sit there revolving, high above the dancing crowd, looking rather foolish. A third couple suddenly goes existentialist, grimacing at each other with wiggling hips, the girl stuffing her thumbs in her ears and twiddling her fingers at her partner. "It's different in the States," says the American compassionately. "They don't go overboard like this." The stomp sounds victorious, like the march of an empire that no one can stop: California to the Vistula, and straight on, irresistibly, to the China Sea. One imagines some old Stalinist, outside in the street, twitching involuntarily as he passes at the sound of this terrible symbol and knowing in his heart that all is lost. They catch the beat from the Voice of America, the movements from some mysterious infection no one can explain, and no Victorian theory of class-relationships will ever speak to them again.

ANTONI SLONIMSKI, the veteran poet, has just published an article in *Nowa Kultura* against the new onslaught of the worst of the West upon Polish culture. He calls it "The Offensive of Nonsense." The symptoms are, to a Westerner, not very terrible: a hypocritically vociferous reception to *Waiting for Godot* in Warsaw, a spate of abstract daubs on the walls of the literary clubs, trickles of free-verse in the little magazines. "It's so Western" (a remark I never heard) is alleged as a standard defence. *On cherche*, as a student whispered into my ear in an experimental student theatre, and this puts it more charitably.

The Tarczynska Theatre in Mokatowska Street is the centre of such a cult. It was founded in April 1955, during the slow political thaw, in the home of a Warsaw student Lech Stefanski in Tarczynska Street. There, with his friend Miron Bialoszewski and a third collaborator who has since disappeared, they wrote, produced, and acted their own one-act plays without charge before invited audiences. Later, when the Party Committees of Warsaw were centralised into a vast square office-block in the centre of town, the committee-rooms in Mokatowska were turned into a student club, the Hybrids, and on

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1st May, 1957, the theatre moved in. They perform on week-days—there is dancing at week-ends—charge just enough to cover the rent and pull in audiences to a capacity of barely one half. "It used to be fuller when you had to be invited," the composer told me sadly. "Now that they can all come they don't." Each programme consists of three one-act fantasies by one dramatist, acted by the author with the help of two or three students. Stefanski is twenty-eight, with dark, fanatical eyes and a passion for the microscopic world of insects, which he has tried to incorporate in stories for the young which he has only recently succeeded in placing with a publisher. He has just written an opera, *The Red Lion*, with the composer of the theatre, Stanislaw Praszynski, who is rather older and much more mournful. "It is about a thirteenth-century alchemist," Praszynski told me, "but it will never be heard—at least not at the State Opera. Much too experimental." Stefanski's playlets are riddling exercises on the nature of this and that: Self, Woman, Things. They accelerate to wild conclusions, occasionally into obscene, anarchist lyrics that set the whole audience laughing. Here is one of them, announced on the loudspeaker as A Concrete Song About the Gangster Paramonow [a murderer who was executed a year or two ago]:

AUTHENTIC FOLKLORE TEXT

It was no
kid's stuff
when Paramonow
played poker.
To the right a gun,
to the left a head.
That's how
Paramanow worked.

And in a haystack
near South Station
slept Paramonow
with his friend,
because Paramonow
had killed a sergeant
to make a poenus of our betters.

And our betters
smelt a rat,
and sent two cops
after him.
And they caught
Paramonow.
And waiting is
the penalty: death.

Mr. Paramonow
sets his teeth,
because now they're putting
a bullet in his mug.
And that friend of his
sits quiet as a kitten,
because he knows he may catch it
for his part with the hammer.

Miron Bialoszewski, who is thirty-four, calls what they do "acting poetry." He acts his own plays devotedly and almost alone, without music, and evokes the lives of beggars, chars, and strolling musicians. He is loving and entirely serious towards the craft of making plays, and when he visits Paris later this year, for the first time, the chances are that he will hardly notice it. A volume of his verse has just been published, after years of waiting, and the plays will follow soon.

IN SUCH haunts of students, thought and talk are free. The press is another story. There is a snowballing legend in the West that the Polish press is now entirely free, even that it is "as free as any in Europe." Before we all go quite mad, a correction. It is true, as I have said, that neo-Marxist student papers like *Po Prostu* of Warsaw and *Wyboje* of Poznan print things that five years ago their editors would have hesitated to think. But they belong to a slightly privileged class of journal. If we group the Polish press into three classes, according to a purely political test (which leaves the active little world of artistic journals out of the story) we should have the following: the official press (Government and Party), which prints today what the rulers were thinking last week; the neo-Marxist papers, mainly student weeklies, which interpret and reinterpret Marxist-Leninism, often in so outrageously independent a way as to justify the name of liberal; and the Catholic press, which is Catholic. Perhaps I have dismissed the third group too hastily—it is not so uninteresting. Poland, as everyone knows, has the world's only Communist régime to enjoy the public and outspoken support of the Catholic hierarchy. "Enjoy" is too mild a term. The régime depends upon the Church, and the Church upon the régime, at least as much as in Spain. If the Church were to withdraw its support Gomulka would lose his balance and fall—or be pushed—back into Stalinism. And since Gomulka is in office precisely because he is not a Stalinist this would mean a new leader and a new régime. Gomulka needs the Church: and the Church needs Gomulka to preserve the very adequate, if not quite ideal, liberty it has now won for itself. But Gomulka is, as it is all too easy to forget, a life-long Communist by his deepest convictions who is treading in what he sincerely supposes to be the footprints of Lenin.

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And in a Leninist society, however defined, the Church would have no political voice. The logic of the situation is clear: the Catholic Church has been allowed to revive its press, but it is not allowed to adopt a political platform—in spite of the fact that it has its own Members of Parliament, an illogical concession that can only be interpreted as a safety-valve. The effect is a little dull. "Reading *Tygodnik Powszechny* (Popular Weekly)," a very counter-revolutionary student told me, "is like eating wax. Why don't they say something?" I suggested, without much conviction, that perhaps "something" was always censored. As a matter of fact it is, but you only have to read the Polish Catholic press to taste the wax in your mouth—the wax of a peculiarly gutless kind of Demochristianity. One cannot help suspecting that, censorship or no censorship, they probably have little to say. I recall the cheerful, non-committal voices of Jerzy Turowicz, the editor of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, and of his very able lieutenant, Jacek Wozniakowski, who is just about to revive the weekly *Znak* ("Sign"). They had just returned to Cracow from Rome, and seemed to view the prospects of Polish Catholicism with a watchful complacency. Whatever the Vatican may say (and the Vatican is much less complacent), official Polish Catholicism is not likely to throw away any of its benefits in the cause of liberty—not even in the cause of its own liberty. "It is only the workers we are afraid of now," an elderly Catholic in Cracow told me in a moment of frankness, and indeed another Poznan is always imminent in a nation of sub-European poverty and a climate of continental extremes. The Catholics, the conservatives, and all who believe in a quiet life are defending a Communist régime against the threat of an industrial proletarian uprising.

Meanwhile the local censor sees each issue of each paper in advance and always deletes three categories of material:

1. Criticism of the Soviet Union.
2. Detailed accounts of the Nazi period. (This because you cannot write a detailed account of the Nazi period without making it sound like an account of the Stalinist period, i.e., like a criticism of the Soviet Union.)
3. Condemnations of government personalities and policies.

The first two limitations apply throughout the Polish press. The third, though in theory applied throughout, is in practice much more liberally interpreted in the case of neo-Marxist papers like *Po Postu* than in the Catholic press. All political comment not made in the name of socialism, in fact, is out.

WHAT has happened to the thorough-going counter-revolutionaries who raised their voices so loud in the October days? So far as I could discover they are out and about; they have simply been warned off. Strictly speaking, "counter-revolutionary sentiments" only exist among the young. The old are dead, the middle-aged are war-weary and frightened, and the Church is determined to be reasonable. Only the young follow their instincts.

The story of Polish youth organisations since October 1956 is well worth telling. In October, at the moment of disintegration, the old monopoly youth organisation ZMP (Polish Youth Organisation) split six ways. First, the Scout movement was reconstituted on more Western lines, political courses were abolished, and fire-lighting and knot-tying were restored to pride of place; the last stage of the battle inside the Scout leadership against the remaining Stalinists is now being fought to a conclusion. Second, two town organisations were formed, RZM and ZMR (Workers' Youth Organisation and Youth Organisation of Workers), the first being slightly the more intellectual and socialist, the second slightly the more proletarian and anti-socialist. On the 2nd January, 1957, they merged, voluntarily, into ZMS (Socialist Youth Organisation), which now has a monopoly, Scouts apart, in the towns. Thirdly, two country organisations sprang up, ZMU and WICI (University Youth Organisation and Central Peasant Organisation), which merged in December 1956 into ZMW (Peasant Youth Organisation), with a similar monopoly in the countryside. There is absolutely no rivalry between ZMS and ZMW. They occupy different floors of the same building in Warsaw and boast their complete identity of view with the Party and the Government. The régime, in fact, has restored the old monopoly-organisation behind a façade of duality.

The sixth organisation, ZMD (Democratic Youth Organisation), is more interesting. It was formed in the hectic October days at youth meetings led by law students, where full-blooded counter-revolutionary demands were made of the Government: the election as President, in place of the actual Presidency Council, of some representative figure—presumably not a Communist; the replacement of the crown in the national arms of Poland over the head of the eagle, which has been bareheaded since 1945; Nuremberg trials for politicians and police who had "committed crimes against the Polish people" in Stalinist days; and freedom of new political association. The ZMD leaders were young, Catholic, anti-Semitic, and probably far more representative of the political views of Polish youth than the leaders of any youth organisation that has existed in Poland since the war. It is a

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sobering thought. Because these foolish young men proceeded to play their doubtful hand very badly indeed. First, they tried to affiliate with the SD (Democratic Party), the Catholic party with a handful of seats in the Sejm. The SD leaders, scenting danger and almost certainly acting upon the advice of the Church hierarchy, refused. The Central Organ of ZMD (COZMD) then hastily disbanded itself, in December, in a vote which one of its leaders described to me as being five to four. In January the Chairman reformed COZMD, on his own initiative and on the grounds that the December vote had been unconstitutional. By February the organisation had been again disbanded, this time officially. Its leaders had been brought into central Warsaw for interrogation and charged with belonging to an illegal organisation. The interrogation was hilarious, the student-lawyers baiting the police on points of law, but the end was unequivocal: a choice of disbandment or five years' imprisonment. This is almost certainly not the end of the story. "Przemyslaw would walk straight into a machine-gun if he made up his mind to do it," I was told by one of the leaders, and after I had hunted him out in a remote and filthy suburb of Warsaw I found it easy to believe. There is already talk of trying a third time. They have no hope of influencing the situation as it is, except for the worse. They are youthful and inexpert fanatics, nearly illiterate for the pressure of their political activity during their careers as students, and itching to push Poland off her tightrope and into the fire.

SOMETIMES, when you start to speak about the new generation in Poland with a fellow-foreigner, and talk waxes loud about neo-Marxists and counter-revolutionary Catholics, you tend to forget that most young people in Poland are neither. What they are is surely a question worth asking. What happens to a generation brought up on two contending and anti-critical religions, only to see them, at a moment of crisis, make a pact of mutual convenience? One's first guess is that the Church-State deal of October 1956 must have sounded to many like the clock striking thirteen times. Two hierarchies simultaneously admitted themselves to have been heavily in the wrong. It was a more-than-revolutionary situation. We have seen Canossas before, but the traffic has always been one-way. This time a sectarian dictator not only conceded to the Church a privileged position: he received, in return, the Church's blessing. By a very sudden and quite unpredicted turn of the wheel, Communism and Christianity have ceased to be rivals in one European society and become, like the Conservative and Labour parties in Britain, twin branches of the one establishment. Is it conceivable that the new generation that has witnessed this double *volte-face* should remain quite uncynical?

I talked about these things with one of the editors of *Wyboje*, a neo-Marxist student journal in Poznan which is roughly like *Po Prostu* in Warsaw. He was a very conformist young man, especially for a Pole. "I don't bother too much about the big questions," he told me. "Everything I believe in is in this paper," pointing to the latest issue. I asked him if many students in Poznan felt like this, and he shook his head. "Most of them don't give a damn about politics or even about religion. We call them liberals. It's the fashionable thing to be. You just analyse your own feelings, and those of your friends. What sort of an attitude is that? It's pure individualism. And they never do anything about politics." I asked him what political activity a young liberal in Poland *could* engage in, as things are. None, he said. It was even difficult to imagine what a political grouping of liberals would be like. "We have no experience of that kind of thing in Poland—not even before the war." The student-acquaintances you pick up everywhere in Polish cities, the infinitely curious young men and women who make sure you are never alone, confirm this impression in a more favourable light. They are serious, but not in the least interested in theories. They want enormously to hear about the West, but not about what the West is thinking. They enjoy Western novels, but exclusively the novels of the sensual, tough, down-to-earth school (Hemingway, the Graham Greene of the Entertainments, Sagan). They are knowingly materialistic. They are sentimental, and hate cruelty in any cause whatever. They are rather cynical, especially about authority, lay or other. However much they may let us help them, it would be impertinent to imagine we can teach them anything at all.

George Watson

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Oliver Bernard

Starting from What is Possible

STARTING from what is possible we arrive
At places we should hardly have dared to aim for:
But no one sets out from the frozen pole,
Or reaches it by sailing.
I have not brought you back a traveller's tale.

All of us are survivors,
And it is not important why we are spared
So long as we are aware that we have been
Passed over.
Passed over by dangerous childhood,
And frightening adolescence,
The age of reason,
Military age,
The age of consent.
Survivors of war and of a peace where anything
Can happen, and often does:
Death on the highway, pox on the street corner;
Dry rot hurling masonry onto tunnelled pavements;
"Acts of God," disasters of all descriptions, floods,
Experimental explosions; and the winter:
Domestic accidents, falls in the darkened stackyard,
Electrocution, fire and suicide.

A proud and peremptory few
Refuse the passive voice.
Others will argue.
But there is no arguing with the facts:
The usual tests
Will reveal a pulse however faint,
A respiration however stealthy.
We cloud the mirror,
And waving a flag our blood is always ready
To break out of this dark corporeal castle.

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T. Ramanathan

The Biggest Census in the World

HE WAS waiting for me at the door, the little door that was the entrance to my cubby-hole, which for convenience I used to call my "room." If someone asked me, "Where are you going?" I would say, "I am going to my room." However, I rarely invited anybody to come to my room.

Yet, here was this tall stranger waiting for me. I knew he would come some hour of the day. There was no avoiding him. He was reading the little encomiums written in my name by the boys of the street (scribbled in pencil).

"Boys in the street are a nuisance," I said, by way of conversation, "Give them a piece of charcoal and they become vandals."

The census man was not interested. I opened the door and let him in. He was tallish, so he had to stoop down to let himself in. I hoped against hope that my dirty clothes would be somehow arranged and my few books in order.

He seemed to take in everything at a glance. "It is nearly seven," I said, "do you have to work late into the night?" My idea was to attract his attention to a beautiful Queen Anne pocket watch hung by a silver chain on the wall. It was my most prized possession, the one thing that in the eyes of the children next door gave me an air of opulence. But the census man seemed hardly to notice the importance of the pocket watch on the wall.

"Who lives next door?" he asked me casually.

"The landlord and his family."

"Anybody else?"

"Well, he has rented his backyard to three other families."

"Your room is also part of the house?"

"Yes."

"Your occupation?"

"Writer."

"Which means 'journalist,'" he said, half to himself.

"If you like it that way," I smiled.

"Your age?"

"Thirty-five."

"Married?"

"Yes."

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"Monthly income?"

"Supposed to be ninety rupees."

"What do you mean, 'supposed'?" he interposed.

"That doesn't come in the census," I said irritably. "My pay is 90 rupees, but I haven't seen the colour of a green note in ages."

"You are Indian, of course?"

"Do you doubt it?" I snapped.

He ignored my irritation.

"You and your wife occupy this room?" I nodded my head. I knew he was thinking something pretty nasty.

"Any children?"

"None."

Well. That settled him. He closed his notebook.

"Do you have to ask all these questions at every house you go into?"

"It is not easy," explained the census man, "but we are determined to do our best."

"What about all these people sleeping on the roads, in parks—the beggars, the lepers . . . ?"

"Every one is taken count of," he said. "They belong to the 350 million free people of India—that is—Bharat."

THE CENSUS man stooped low to get out of the room again. Just then my wife, who had gone next door to knead the flour paste, came in. I shut the door in the face of the census man once my wife came in.

"Have these people no other work?" my wife complained. "They come into houses uninvited. They have no respect for womenfolk nowadays."

"They have their jobs to do," I protested. "Anyway, he won't come again."

"I hear they are kidnapping children into Hyderabad," she went on chattering.

"We have no children," I said absentmindedly.

My wife looked at me curiously. Perhaps she thought I was daft. She proceeded to lay out my meal. I proceeded to gobble my food. I am used to that too. Then with an "I shall be late. Keep the door open," I walked out. She knew, of course, that I was going to the cinema. She never grudged me the four and three-quarter annas. Force of habit. If you persist in a habit, wives of course get worried if you don't keep on persisting.

Luckily for me, there were only two persons in the gallery, so I could stretch my limbs comfortably on the seat opposite. The hall was darkened and soon I was listening to the voice of Mr. Berkely Hill. I sat up and took notice when he began: "The biggest census in the world." Mr. Hill led the audience around the busy streets of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras.

"When the census man comes to your door . . ." purred Mr. Hill, ". . . whether you are a city worker or a day labourer, or drive a bullock cart. . . ." Well, I didn't drive a bullock cart and I had already faced the census man. There had been nothing exciting about it. I lost all interest in the census and fell into a snooze.

When I woke up, my legs were touching the ground. Someone had shifted my feet off the front seat. There were whispers. The screen was a blaze of colour. Somewhere in Mexico . . . Aztec civilisation . . . Fitzpatrick . . . snooze. . . .

When I woke up again, I heard someone say: "Now he will die." I sat up with a start to watch an action-packed drama (a man-hunt in the Wild West) drawing to a close.

"Come out before I blow your brains out," shouts the hero.

"Come and get me," says the villain.

Bang! and the barn door opens, and the villain lies dead, shot through the heart. A horse rears off and leaves the saddle behind. . . . I make for the exit.

OUTSIDE, it is a beautiful night. There are no lights in the street. The moon comes up out of a medley of wool and lights up my alley. I light a beedi and, like a tight-rope walker, tip-toe gingerly over the sleeping bodies of men, women, and children. For many years now, I have walked through this alley. It is in the heart of the town, and yet so removed and hedged between the rows of inscrutable doorways that the stranger might spend many weary hours looking for a num-

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ber. The postman is, of course, a wonder. He knows the names of the occupants by rote. The women are his friends. They hardly talk to any other male when their husbands are not at home. But the postman is permitted to be familiar.

On a pitch-dark night, when there is only one street lamp, my alley takes on an air of sadness. When it rains, the people who sleep out disappear, and from end to end, the long labyrinth of gutter and drain looks desolate. On a warm, starry night, or at best on a full moon day, with a gust of sea wind driving the dead leaves in a whirl, the huddle of flesh, lovers, old people, vermin, and rats are transformed into a phantasmagoria of souls in pain.

It is my peculiar pleasure to feast my eyes on this elemental orgy of passion, in a world dead to all life. The turn of a leg in sleep, the arms in the act of embrace, the waking whisper of a lover to his mate.

As usual, I come to the street tap that is turned on and left flowing by some careless person. I wash my legs, turn the tap off as an act of virtue, and walk tip-toe to my door, lest I soil my feet again before I enter my room!

The door is ajar, and the light is burning inside. I become irritated. How often I have warned my wife that she should bolt the door before falling asleep. I push the door open in a temper. Suppose it were some stranger entering as I am doing now? Late as it is, I must wake her and pick a quarrel with her. The room is empty. The mats have been spread and the pillows laid. The little kerosene lamp is burning on a full wick. Yet she is not there. I have a sinking feeling. There is a footstep as she enters. I realise that there is some commotion next door, something afoot at that late hour of the night.

Suddenly my wife bursts into the room. "Oh, you are back," she says, peremptorily digging into an old box and pulling out a bundle of clean rags.

"That will do," she says, "the midwife will be here any minute."

"Here? Where?"

"Next door," she says impatiently. "Janaki is in pains."

"Janaki? Is she the one with varicose veins?" My wife gives me a withering look.

"I have no time to be explaining to you," she shouts, and makes her exit. Evidently Janaki must be the squint-eyed creature with green, bulging veins knotted at the joint of her knees.

"How funny," I say to myself. "Only this morning she was doing her chores. Now she is groaning." Only a thin partition divides Janaki's apartment from ours. The men of the family must have left the women to fend for themselves. I hear my wife's voice amongst the others. Women want men, but in their moment of physical suffering they want to be left alone.

"Ram—Ramchandra—O—Rama——" her groans fall on my soul like a knife. I am like one drugged, unable to move. I roll listlessly on the bare mat on the floor. There is a hush, but not for long. Again the groans start, "Ram—Ram—Ram." My wife comes back.

"It will be any minute now," she says. "The midwife has taken charge."

Across the thin wedge of the boxwood wall, not a yard away, the hushed groan of a woman in pain at grips with death, and a child fighting for breath, creates anew the sense of oppression and awe. A terrible hush, and there is a blind cry of pain and the sudden wail of a child.

It is born, I think. It has chosen this dark alley, these meagre surroundings. Between evening and midnight, a man-child has crept into the home next door. It seems long ago that the census man was in my room. I can hear the slow tick-tick of the Queen Anne watch on the wall. It seems a sort of nightmare, the people sleeping in the alley, the faint rustle of the wind in the gutter, the uncanny stillness next door. I am bathed in perspiration.

There is someone else in the room. She is sleeping, one foot of cold floor dividing our mats. I put out my hand. She rolls over and we are locked in one embrace.

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Wayland Young

The Montesi Affair

A Severe Case of Pseudo-Revolution

ON THE afternoon of 9th April, 1953, Maria Montesi, the wife of a Roman carpenter, and her daughter Wanda, a girl in her early twenties, went together to the cinema. Her other daughter, Wilma, said she didn't like the sound of the film they wanted to see and would stay at home. When they came back, Wilma was not there. At dawn on the morning of the 11th, thirty-six hours after Wilma's disappearance, the partly-clothed body of a girl was found apparently drowned on the beach at a lonely place called Tor Vaianica, about fifteen miles south of Rome on the Tyrrhenian coast. It had no shoes, stockings, or suspender belt on. It was taken to the mortuary and identified as Wilma Montesi by her family. The police made a routine enquiry into her death; on the strength of what the family told them they decided that what happened was this: Wilma had had some sort of sore or chilblain on her heel which she had been treating with iodine. There had been talk in the family about the virtues of sea water for sore heels, and also for removing unsightly iodine stains. She must have taken the opportunity of a few free hours to go to Ostia and bathe her heel in the sea. As she had her period at that time, she had fainted while she was paddling, had fallen in, been drowned, and been carried ten miles down the coast to Tor Vaianica by the wind.

The finding of the girl's body appeared very small on the local page of the Roman papers. When she was identified by her family and it appeared that there was some mystery about the manner of her death, the story got a little bigger, but still on the local page; it rose to, say, half a column. The routine police and judicial enquiries into her death were rather long-drawn-out, and there was a half-hearted attempt to make a mystery out of the lack of an immediate clear announcement. The City of Rome, like Italy itself, was under Christian Democrat government, and anything served the Communist press in those days to raise a passing suspicion of improprieties on the part of the police or local government. A prominent and respected examining magistrate said that he was conducting the enquiry in person. But when the announcement about the presumed manner of her death was finally made, journalistic eyebrows were definitely raised; that was a long way for a body to be washed down the coast in the tideless Mediterranean. Why did she leave her money and jewels behind? And above all, why did she take off her suspender belt to paddle? The suspender belt was what made the biggest impression, and a week or two after the other papers had dropped the story a scurrilous little rag said that the suspender belt had been brought into the police headquarters of Rome by carrier pigeons, and there destroyed. The Italian for

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carrier pigeons is *piccioni viaggianti*. What was behind this dim crack? Obviously the paper was sidestepping a libel action with a pun. Well, the Foreign Minister was called Piccioni, Attilio Piccioni. Eyebrows shot up. But no, really, that was too much. Eyebrows down again.

A little later—by now we are in May 1953—the Communist press began to talk, though still quite quietly, about cigarette smuggling along that bit of coast at Tor Vaianica. And perhaps drugs. The carrier pigeon disappeared, and was succeeded by a *biondino, figlio di papa d.c.*, a blond boy, a daddy's boy, the son of a Christian Democrat bigwig. In Italy, where life is hard for young people of the middle classes with no money behind them, where young graduates are flung in thousands on a labour market quite incapable of absorbing them, where *avvocati* dispute all day and half the night round café tables and *ingegneri* take Vespas to pieces for lack of anything better to do, the reproach of "daddy's boy" is a strong one. It means ostentatious idleness and irresponsibility, fast open cars, dark glasses, gorgeous starlets in and out of bikinis, parties, surf-riding at Positano, skiing at Cortina, balls in Venice, and if anything goes wrong, well, papa's influence will put it right. Who was this *biondino*, then? Piccioni had a couple of sons, but they were both dark. Come to that, most of the Christian Democrat ministers had sons. Other papers said that the boy in question wasn't blond at all, but dark.

THEN, in January 1954, heralded by a few days' premonitory rumbling in the gutter press, the scandal broke with unimaginable violence. There was a young man called Silvano Muto who edited a weekly newspaper called *Attualità*. It was like many other such; lots of rather good photographs and articles about this and that and life in Italy, written for very little by some of those scores of workless young graduates, written in good Italian and often as not with a sound knowledge and a genial wit. Muto's was rather far Right, getting on towards sympathising with the neo-Fascists. In his weekly, Muto had published an article the preceding October saying that right next to Tor Vaianica, the beach where Wilma was found, was a hunting reserve and hunting lodge called Capocotta. This reserve, not very big as such shoots go in Italy, had been the property of the Royal Family, but since the installation of the Republic in 1946 it had been run as a syndicate. Its members, among whom were some very prominent politicians and businessmen, went there to shoot game and occasionally to hunt wild boar. There were allegations about girls, about drugs, about orgies. Had Wilma Montesi been one of the girls? Had she been carried down unconscious to the water's edge and left to drown?

Here was a scandal indeed. For months everyone had been wondering about that poor girl, poor and virtuous, or perhaps not so virtuous, but in any case, the daughter of a poor and respectable family, and everyone was sure now that there was something horrible behind it. All that gossip; buzz buzz. And now here was someone with the courage to come right out in the open and say it. Now at last the truth would come to light, and if there was anything in it, someone would have to pay. Our government! Our fine, clean, Christian government; look what it is. It's just an organ of the Mafia. How many Sicilians are there in the Cabinet anyhow? Princes, Cardinals, Big Business, Cabinet Ministers; they're all the same, all a rotten, decadent lot, covering up for each other. The Communist and Nenni socialist press really pulled the stops out, and the pro-government press could do no less than scathingly and incredulously quote what they said.

For a few weeks the thing was allowed to run its course, but then the Government acted. Clearly something had to be done, and done soon, and done dramatically. Silvano Muto was charged under an old Fascist law—Fascist legislation has never, as a whole, been repealed—with "publishing falsehoods likely to disturb the public peace." There was a sigh of satisfaction; at last something was going to happen. At last the powers that be

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had admitted that something was up, and there was going to be a trial. The judges would bring all the facts out into the daylight and there would be an orderly exposure of everything which needed exposing, in a court, with rules. Admittedly they did seem to be trying the wrong man, the wrong side, but any trial was better than none.

At once, all the lawyers involved started giving press conferences—as often as not in their pyjamas: I don't know why Italian lawyers so much like being photographed in their pyjamas—and trying the case before the public. Muto chose as his defence counsel Giuseppe Sotgiu, and that was a sensational choice. Sotgiu was a Communist, and a very prominent and brilliant one. The alliance of extreme Left with extreme Right to attack the Centre government is by no means rare in Italy. Sotgiu was not only an *avvocato* but also a teacher of law in the University of Rome and President of Rome Provincial Council which, unlike the Communal Council, had a Communist and Socialist majority. He was a picturesque figure, a sort of Italian Birkenhead, whose cracks in and out of court went round the drawing-rooms as Birkenhead's used to in London.

WHEN the trial began, Muto acknowledged his article and the Judge asked him how he knew what he had printed about the Montesi death. He replied that he had been told it by two girls who moved in that circle. Who were the girls? They were called Anne Maria Caglio and Adriana Bisaccia. Very well, where were they? Muto didn't know. Well, he must find them, or someone must. Five weeks' adjournment.

As might have been expected, the scandal now rose in a ceaseless crescendo. The doctors who had examined Wilma Montesi's body began to contradict each other, and the journalists who saw them carried on the good work. The doctors disagreed only about the time of her death. The journalists disagreed about more fundamental things; she was a virgin, she wasn't a virgin, she was pregnant. Her stomach was empty, was full of ice cream, was full of drugs. The secretary of the shooting syndicate was identified; he was a Sicilian called Ugo Montagna, otherwise the Marquis of St. Bartholomew, and a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre. His syndicate was called the Society of St. Hubert. He sued Muto for libel, and his lawyer threw scorn on the whole thing, saying: "It is well known that my client doesn't even smoke."

Adriana Bisaccia was found quite soon; she was a girl of fairly obscure origin, who came from the little town of Avellino behind Naples. She had come to Rome and taken to the way of life of the young people who hung about the bars in Piazza di Spagna and Via del Babuino where the film producers and television people went, vaguely hoping for a job. When the press questioned her about what she knew she answered vaguely; she really didn't remember much. Perhaps she might have been somewhere or said something, but really, she didn't come into it. For some time nobody could find Anna Maria Caglio at all. They found her father; he was a respected citizen, well known in his quarter of Milan. *His* father, a "patriot and thinker," even had a statue in a public place. He was on bad terms with his daughter, was out of touch. Was it true she was or had been Montagna's mistress? Certainly not. On the other hand he did know she believed her life was in danger. They found her uncle, Don Ernesto Moneta, a priest. Oh no, he wasn't on bad terms with his niece at all. He knew all about her. Yes, she had been Montagna's mistress. Probably she had told Muto these things out of revenge, because Montagna had dropped her. In time Anna Maria Caglio herself was run to earth in a convent in Florence, and was persuaded to tell the press more or less all she knew. The scandal grew and grew.

When she gave evidence at the resumed Muto trial she said that among Montagna's associates (yes, Montagna had been her lover) in the shooting syndicate and in various building and housing societies in which he was involved, were not only Piero Piccioni, the Foreign Minister's son, but a number of pillars of Church and State, and a whole

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string of prefects and officials and businessmen of greater or lesser standing.

When Adriana Bisaccia gave her evidence, it did not amount to much. Had she told Muto these things, and if so, how did she know them? "I am in no condition to remember," she kept repeating. They could get nothing from her. Later on, and under relentless pressure from the prosecution, she burst out: "I can't invent names to keep people quiet, even if the whole nation is waiting for them." And again: "I know nothing. Why don't you bring the guilty people here? You know who they are. You are playing politics, and I have been ruined in the game." These tragic outbursts made a deep impression but got things no further. She had indeed been ruined; the press was full of every intimate detail of her life and her family background. Her little ambitions in the film and television world, her affairs, her nightdresses, were all investigated by the papers. It was announced that she was to play the part of an amnesic maid in a film.

Anna Maria Moneta Caglio, on the other hand, was made of sterner stuff. Her evidence about her association with Montagna and his friendships and activities was detailed and firm. She said he had tried to poison her, and to send her out of Rome. She said he and Piero Piccioni, the son of the Foreign Minister and a jazz bandleader on the radio, had gone together to the Chief of Police, Tommaso Pavone, to have the manner of Wilma Montesi's death hushed up. She said that during the preliminary enquiries the authorities had advised her to "keep out of the whole affair." She had been in touch with a certain Jesuit Father who had passed on her revelations to the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior. She had written "testaments" and sent them to all sorts of eminent people, even the Pope.

Then a Colonel of the Carabineers, the other police force which has a traditional rivalry with the Public Security (of which Pavone was head), made a report about Montagna's antecedents. The report was read in Court, and was also stuck up on the walls of Rome. Montagna, it said, had been a pimp and spy for the OVRA (Mussolini's secret police), the Nazis, and the Americans in turn. That day Pavone resigned.

THE affair was now raised beyond hope of remedy to the dignity of high politics; if a Chief of Police is forced to resign, the government is threatened. The cabinet met and met again. There were blazing rows in Parliament. The Left called for the resignation of the Government and a Parliamentary enquiry into the whole affair. The E.D.C. debates were interrupted. What about the Foreign Minister, Piccioni? How could a man represent Italy before the nations when his son was involved in a thing like this?

Italy was a mess; Italy was a sink; Italy was falling to pieces! Things couldn't go on like this any longer. An organisation of speculators in foreign currencies was uncovered, and no less than 186 people were charged. Two whole factories making drugs near Milan were closed down because a good proportion of their output was going into the illegal market. Shipments of drugs were confiscated at Naples, at Genoa. Everywhere one heard the word *sottogoverno*—the "undergovernment"—the state within a state of parasitic crime and profit. The lay centre parties, which had been taken into coalition at the end of 1953, began to chafe. They were supposed to represent disinterested morality and high intellectual standards among the big battalions of the Christian Democrats. The coalition wobbled heavily. Old Piccioni, a tragic figure now, had not left his house for several days. In Paris the great E.D.C. debate was being fought out; American pressure on all the countries concerned to make their decision was unrelenting: in Rome the Communists were asking when the debate was to be. A rudderless country. . . .

It was Anna Maria Caglio—advised by whom? or acting on what incredible sense of political timing for a girl of twenty-three?—who cut things short and set events on a new course. Her landlady told the press that the Caglio had written the name of the murderer in one of her famous "testaments," and given

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it to her. The landlady was fetched to court. Had she this testament of the Caglio's? No. Why not? The Caglio had asked her to post it back to her and she had done so. When? That very morning. Sitting suspended; police cars roared through the streets with sirens going. Not in the letter-box. Try the Post Office. Yes, it was at the Post Office. Sitting resumed.

The Judge: "We have in our hands an envelope. We tear it open along the top. We take out a plain sheet of white paper, we unfold it, and we read: 'The head of the gang is Montagna and the murderer is Piero Piccioni.' "

The tension at that moment was right up to flashpoint; the riot squad was formed up in a solid cordon round the law courts. Doubts about the Caglio's evidence were forgotten.

THE MUTO trial was adjourned indefinitely, before Piero Piccioni or Montagna or Pavone had been able to give evidence, and a third judicial investigation into the death of Wilma Montesi was opened. This time it was confided not to the magistrate who had already filed the matter twice, but to Raffaelo Sepe, the President of the Instruction Section of the Court of Appeal, and the head of that branch of the judiciary. Sepe, enormously fat and entirely phlegmatic, took the centre of the stage.

For the rest of that spring and all through the summer he continued his laborious, his mountainous enquiries. It was said he worked all night. When a witness came to his office whom he did not want recognised by the press, he had all the lights fused for a few minutes. Sepe's all right, people thought; the Government have really put a good man on to it at last, and what's more they're allowing him to work in the right direction. The day of "heel-washing," of the red herring, is over. Sepe is the conscience of the Italian people. The tension dropped.

But new people kept cropping up, among them Piero Pierotti, a young man who had emigrated and taken work in the mines in Luxembourg. He came to Rome and told Dr. Sepe, and the press, the following story. One day some months before her death, when he had been on holiday in Rome, he had picked up Wilma Montesi at the station and had taken her to Ostia three times in the following days. She had offered to help him in his career with her influence. She had also offered to get him employment smuggling drugs from Germany into Italy. Out of curiosity, he said, he had agreed. They had visited certain friends of his at Ostia, and then, on the third outing, she had suddenly left him in a bar. He had followed her out and seen her get into a car beside a tall, bald man with distinguished manners. He had never seen her again. They could check his story by looking up the friends they had seen in Ostia. For instance, he had gone to see a man who had formerly given him a violin to sell on his behalf in Rome. Pierotti had never handed over the money, and they had talked about this. For some days Pierotti's friend's violin filled all the newspapers. The man for whom it was to have been sold was traced. Yes, he said, Pierotti did come to see me about that time, and we did talk about the money for the violin. But there certainly wasn't any girl with him. How could anyone suppose I would have been so indelicate as to mention payment for a violin in the presence of a young lady? Pierotti vanished from the story, and was later killed in a motor-cycle smash.

Then there was Michele Simola, a young Sicilian criminal, who came forward to say that one day he had picked up a woman called Spanish Mary in the streets of Rome, and had found himself involved in a distribution service for packets of cocaine. Among the girls he met acting as couriers was Wilma Montesi. But Dr. Sepe summarily arrested Simola for perjury, and he was only acquitted three years later at the Venice trial, when he retracted his evidence.

Next was a personage who was never seen at all, but whose presence was felt throughout Italy: *Gianna la Rossa*, or Red Jenny. Dr. Sepe received a letter signed "Red Jenny" and enclosing half a piece of paper, torn. The other half, which fitted it, was produced by a certain Don Tonino Onnis, parish priest of a

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tiny village in the Appenines. Yes, he said, a beautiful red-haired woman had come to his presbytery and written a letter on his typewriter, and left this torn counterfoil with it. He consulted his bishop about whether the secrecy of the confessional would be violated by his handing over the letter, and was reassured. The letter was opened, and made the usual charges against Piccioni and Montagna. But Red Jenny was never found.

IN AUGUST, as a result of Sepe's enquiries, Piero Piccioni, Montagna, and Polito, who had been chief of the Rome Police at the time of the girl's death, were arrested. The Foreign Minister Piccioni resigned immediately. On the following day the papers reported that the manner of Montagna's arrest had been as follows. He had gone out to dinner in a restaurant as usual, and while there had bought an evening paper. "Montagna arrested," said the headlines. He finished a good dinner with his friends, had coffee and liqueurs, and towards midnight strolled along with the paper under his arm, surrounded by press photographers, to the Regina Coeli, the great old prison in the heart of Rome. A sleepy warder denied him entrance, but Montagna showed him the headline in the paper, and the warder grumblingly admitted his right to go in. Montagna shook hands with his friends, and submitted to his captor. One had to grant him a certain style.

Piero Piccioni was charged with "blameworthy homicide." Ugo Montagna and Saverio Polito were charged with complicity in Piccioni's alleged crime, and all three were charged with conspiracy.

They did not have to stay long in prison, because towards the end of that year Sotgiu, the Communist lawyer who had defended Muto, was discredited. He and his wife together were charged by the police with the most scandalous activities, which I am prevented by the law of libel from naming, because they were never brought to trial in an open court; they were absolved by the examining magistrate on a legal point. Discredited they were, however, and the balance in the war of scandals being thus restored, Piccioni and Montagna were released from prison to await their trial in freedom.

TWO and a half years later, in the spring of 1957, the great trial took place in Venice. After four months' sittings, after scores of witnesses from all over Italy had been heard, after the court had gone to Rome and stood on the beach where Wilma Montesi was found, after the flow of libel actions and counter-actions had reached unprecedented proportions, Piero Piccioni, Montagna, and Polito were resoundingly acquitted. Piero Piccioni had a cast-iron alibi; the acquittal of the other two followed inevitably. The prosecution evidence came mainly from Anna Maria Caglio, and she was contradicted over and over again by other witnesses, when other witnesses were available. When they were not, she was contradicted by the accused. A couple of magicians turned up, to give evidence for the prosecution, and one of them was sentenced to prison for perjury. Simola retracted his story. The saga of Red Jenny was investigated, and found inconclusive, to put it at the lowest. Several snowballs of gossip were traced back to their origins, the press. Quite clearly, when you went into it calmly and fully, those three men had had nothing whatever to do with the girl's death, and had never even met her.

How she *had* died, on the other hand, remained as obscure as ever. At the end of the Venice trial the central figure of the whole story was the girl's own uncle, one Giuseppe Montesi. When he was asked how he spent the afternoon and evening of his niece's death, he had at first answered: at work. But his colleagues said he had left his office early. This in the end he admitted, and said that he had been trying to conceal the fact that he had gone out that afternoon with his fiancée's sister, who had later borne him a child. But some other people gave evidence that the fiancée's sister had not been with Giuseppe Montesi that afternoon, but with them, seeing a train off; they even produced the dated railway ticket. After the end of the Venice trial Giuseppe Montesi was arrested for criminal libel in having brought civil libel actions

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against his colleagues at work for saying he left the office early.

WHAT had really happened in Italy during those years? A girl was found drowned. That must happen about once a week in a nation of fifty million people. But one day, at one moment, in one café or at one dinner table, some never now to be identified man or woman said: "I'll bet I know who did it. . . ." There followed a snowball of gossip, an unbridled press campaign, a procession of perjurors both mad and sane, frantic speculations by political pressure groups, the crisis of conscience of a whole régime, the breath of revolution itself. And then the awakening after the nightmare, the light of reason and probability, evidence and justice; there followed the detumescence. Why did it go like that? Why was there this swelling convulsion of a whole society? Why was it that one pebble dropped in the pond—"I'll bet I know who did it. . . ."—should have raised such foaming waves?

If it hadn't been that it would have been something else. Italy was ripe for upheaval. In order to understand why, let us look first at the character of the Italian people. The Northern visitor to Italy sees first, perhaps, people laughing and singing. His ear and his heart are delighted by these sudden, inconsequent outbursts of song in the street, dropped, even consigned, to the warm air. Singing, and singing loud, seems to be the best thing to do; so they sing. He gets to know them a little, and finds a gregarious people. Let's go out, let's call up some friends. It would be a pity to go out without Aldo and Massimo and Elena and Vittoria and Carlino and the kid, what's-his-name-now? Of course there's room in the car. You sit on my lap and let us polemicise about factions in the Social Democrat Party.

Further, and he will find a promiscuous people. Youth is short, the heart is warm, the body is simple and good, like bread. It is our capital; invest, invest! Let there be many and happy returns for our investment and let us laugh and sing with our children and dress them in chinchilla and play with them until we all fall asleep at two in the morning. The family is a sacred institution, but when all is said and done love is love and a baby is a baby; one leads to the other and all flesh is one in God.

But further still he will find a poor people. Laughter and friendship and babies, they all depend on food, and food depends on money. There are towns in the South where they live not in houses but in caves cut out of the native rock. A Parliamentary Committee of enquiry headed by the Social Democrat Deputy, Vigorelli, who later became Minister of Labour, reported in 1953 that three and a half million people (repeat; 3,500,000) could never at any time (repeat; at any time) afford to eat meat or sugar. There are families in Rome itself who live six, eight, eleven—not to a room, but to a plank shack. Vegetable soup, and squid on Sundays. Heating by communal camp-fires of discarded fruit-boxes from the market; sanitation under the railway line. I have seen families in Naples, since the war, living under canvas on the sidewalk. There was one family in Rome living in a rusty old boiler by the roadside; the way in was through the furnace door on all fours. This was beside the bath of Caracalla, right on the tourist track, so they aren't there any more. This year, in 1957, there was a rising in a mountain town called Sulmona, with the paving stones torn up for barricades, police charges, teargas, firing, the sack of government offices, incendiarism, and deaths. Sulmona was the centre of a military district, and once a year, for a few days, a few thousand conscripts were quartered there before being drafted away for their training. Then the map was redrawn, and Sulmona was no longer to be the centre of the military district: there would no longer be those few days' extra business, no longer that extra sale of toothpaste, postcards, boot-polish, glasses of wine. . . . To the barricades!

MONEY matters in Italy. It matters in other places too, where the lowest standard of life is about the same; in the Arab countries, for instance. But in those countries hardly anybody has any. In Italy there are

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quite a lot of people, very visible and very audible people, who have some. The poor in Italy have lived for a couple of thousand years in the shadow of the senior civilisation of the Western world. They know it and they understand it and they love it. The people who have the money are not an abstract. They, not a colourless concept of class, but the inheritors of the marvellous individuals who have made of Europe and America the precious web of wisdom and custom which they are. Tacitus, Horace, and Catullus; Marcus Aurelius, Galen, St. Benedict, Gregory the Great; St. Thomas Aquinas and Dante and Giotto and St. Francis; Aldus Manutius; Lorenzo the Magnificent and Alberti and Botticelli and Macchiavelli; Julius II and Leonardo and Michelangelo and Bernini; Titian and Palladio and the Doges, Galileo and Columbus, Palestrina and Monteverdi, Tasso and Ariosto, and so on right down to Verdi and Toscanini, to Garibaldi and Croce and Fermi; there is hardly a glory or sweetness of the human spirit which, in the first sixteen centuries of our era, did not originate in Italy. The poor are everywhere, yes; but nowhere so much as in Italy do they understand the beauty and the wisdom which can be built on wealth. At a time when to the hungry English peasant a rich man meant someone whose armour clanked when he threw a chewed mutton bone over his shoulder to a great slavering hound in some smoky keep, to the hungry Italian peasant it meant any of the people in that list, or their patrons, down to, say, Ariosto.

It rubbed off on to the poor around, this Italian wisdom and beauty, this old, original grace and balance. If you have lived in Italy and seen the Northern visitors come and go, there is one moment which crops up again and again; the moment when the visitor, having for the first time got far enough in the language to talk to the common people, to peasants and workmen, comes in with that look of comfort and delight and bursts out: "God, they're so *sane*; they're so *nice*!" They are; they have learned how to be from the people who invented sanity and niceness and taught the world.

But it's difficult to be nice if you are hungry; the effects of hunger are apathy and anger. There is a popular saying, *"Prima la trippa, e poi la virtù."* "First tripe, then virtue." Again, this is true everywhere, but in Italy there is more to be rich for. They learn about Dante and Michelangelo and Garibaldi at school, then they are pitched out to a lifetime of, to put it at the worst, dandelion soup. The commonest form of moderate abuse among the working class is: *"Maleducato,"* "ill-educated."

But every civilisation, indeed every type of human character, sooner or later generates its opposite. It is a commonplace how a bad society will cast in the negative mould of its own image a good sort of character. The persecution creates the martyr, the oppression creates the revolutionary, the rat-race the contemplative, the war the peacemaker, the wrong the hero, and the silence the poet. But if a general and diffuse evil by long pressure concentrates and secretes a drop of particular good, so also may a general good, especially if it is weakened by poverty and hunger, secrete a drop of particular evil, and this is what has happened in Italy. This admirable and lovable civilisation has, with the arrival of industry and the concentration of industrial wealth in new hands, given rise to its own opposite in a peculiarly boorish form of political and economic egoism. The word "egoist" has not been a very current one in English since Meredith used it to apply to the refinements of personal feeling. The whole permission-seeking, queue-conscious structure of English life makes the word almost a bygone in the political and economic sense. But in the freer, more dangerous air of Italy it is still very much alive, and the distinction between individualism, which is permissible, and egoism, which is not, is a familiar and useful one.

There is a picture of a contemporary Italian egoist. He is fifty, a large man, strong and stout and gross. He is not a big industrialist; the really big people have got past that stage long since and are often model employers. He may be a small industrialist, or a bank manager, or an insurance man, or a

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landowner, and with any of these he may combine being a local politician, or even a national politician in Rome. Most typically of all, he may be a policeman or an official. He is, to put it briefly, uncivilised. If there is misery, well, that's the Church's affair. Let the Church console, or even distribute alms. If there is injustice, well, what is justice anyhow? A tussle. The weakest goes to the wall. If there is oppression.... What? Oppression? Me? That's ridiculous. I'm a simple man, a family man. I see my own children don't want for anything, that's all. If he sees a deal coming up—meet you in the café. You take a cut, I take a cut, I take your cut, I'll remember you next time, half a million, twelve and a half per cent, fall due in November, I'll see to that side of it, I tell you what we'll do, not a word to the others, a good business, fifteen per cent, we all have to live.

What I am describing is not any specific class or trade; it is a type of mentality, and it crops up in all walks of life. These people are philistines, hypocrites, and above all, strong. You can't get round them; Italian society has not yet found a way of getting round them. They are the obverse, the mirror image, of that sane and splendid civilisation.

I SAID the Italians were gregarious and promiscuous and loved children. They have sun in their bones. Men and women, men and men, and women and women naturally, unless they have some special cause for aloofness, walk arm in arm. Brothers and cousins kiss on meeting and parting. The girls don't shave under their arms. If you see someone you admire in the street, you go right on admiring them, and they like it. If you feel like talking to a stranger, you do so. If your eye meets someone else's, you do not look hurriedly away, you smile. In contrast with the French custom, you use the second person singular *tu* as soon as you have anything interesting to say. The use of the third person *lei* among people of the same age and condition is either cold or acrimonious. People get on well together unless something goes wrong; then they quarrel. Friendship is warm, and so is disagreement. A cold disapproval is not an Italian attitude. The Italians are at home in their own skins, at home with each other, profoundly and delightedly at home with the common stuff of humanity. You could not find a more un-Italian sentiment than Sartre's: "Hell is other people."

But this too has its obverse, and the obverse has an almost untranslateable name: *omertà*. *Omertà* means, etymologically, manliness. It is more Sicilian than Italian proper but, especially since the absorption of the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily into a unitary Italy, it has become a political idea of the first importance. In present use it means "solidarity," shading off into "complicity." If your brother, your cousin, your friend, even your business associate, is in trouble with the law, with his enemies, with public opinion, *omertà* enjoins that you stand by him through thick and thin. *Omertà* takes precedence over pity, interest, commonsense, and particularly over justice. When it is well-developed it can be a web of guilt as strong and resilient as that other, instinctive web of laughter and sympathy. For him who tears the web, *vendetta*. *Omertà* is the very fabric of the now quiescent Camorra in Naples and the still very active Mafia in Sicily. At first sight these criminal organisations have always seemed to Northern visitors to be something akin to banditry, or to gangsterism in the American sense. The fact that many of the great American gangsters had their early training in the Mafia seems to accord with this. But the Mafia is more than banditry; it is an alternative government. It collects taxes, and in return it affords protection and punishes crime. If a foreigner has something stolen in Sicily, he has a better chance of getting it back from the Mafia than from the Police. The Mafia is the natural defence of a people which has been governed and settled by more alien invaders than any other in Europe. Sicily has been kicked around from power to power and dynasty to dynasty like the football it resembles on the map. The Mafia is the continuity of Sicily.

The idea of a real government lurking behind the empty show of legal government,

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an institutional and undying *éminence grise,* is a familiar one. There is a word for that too; *sottogoverno,* the under-government. There is not the same attachment and sense of duty to the legal government as there is in Northern countries. Tax-evasion is regarded as normal, and it was only in 1954 that those taxes which cost more to collect than the revenue they brought in were abolished. There is a lot of corporate feeling left over in Italian hearts after the state has commanded all it can, and this remainder often goes into *omertà* of one sort or another.

BUT *omertà* also generates its own opposite—perhaps it is possible to draw the map of a national character entirely in these zigzags—and this, of course, is treachery. I suppose in the general stream of European literature and tradition, treachery has figured as the Italian, and even more the Sicilian, defect. The German is brutal, the Spaniard stiff-necked, the Portuguese idle, the Frenchman frivolous, the Englishman perfidious, which is different; blander, and more political. But there is the Italian of the European imagination, all flashing black eyes and stiletto, not perfidious, nothing so calculating, but deeply, passionately, and personally treacherous. There's something in it, too. *Omertà* and treachery are very close; there are everyday Italian situations where one can only say that the characters are locked in the embrace of treachery. Treachery can even seem like an aspect of love. In an Italian marriage a "treachery," or deceit, ends up in a perfectly harmonious triangle, the *piccola combinazione* of innumerable jokes. It has to, in a country where there is no divorce; but on the other hand divorce is not so necessary, when people are content with triangles. About treachery too the language is illuminating; there are no Italian words for loyalty or treason. *Tradimento* is precisely this personal treachery; *lealtà* is not loyalty, but honesty, truthfulness, and *omertà*, as we have seen, is closer to complicity. It is precisely when this unwelcome thing, the state, comes on the scene that the language has a glaring gap. An un-Italian Activities Committee, if there could ever be such a thing, would lack the two crucial ideas altogether; it would have to investigate a man's "honesty" to his country, or his "treachery" against it.

The Italian state is protected not by the concept of loyalty or treason, but by that of *vilipendio*, another word which cannot be exactly translated. It means roughly "abuse," or "speaking ill of." It is a crime to "vilipend the Nation," and also to "vilipend the Armed Forces." Once again, it is a generated opposite. Faced with this old indifference or antagonism of the subject towards the state, the friends of the latter, the old nationalist Right and their successors the Fascists, erected this flimsy, capricious opposite and built it into the criminal code.

And now back to our starting point about the Italian character; laughter, song, warmth. Quick to rejoice, yes; but, as the Northern visitor will also see on his very first walk through the streets, quick to anger. The sudden glow of love and contentment has for its opposite the sudden glow of rage; round the corner from the inconsequent burst of song you come on the blazing, histrionic row. The first two Italian words which every tourist or soldier or businessman picks up are *Amore*, which is the first word in every language, and then, *basta!* "enough!" or "shut up!"

WHAT happened in the spring of 1954 was that the whole nation stood up and gave one single roar of *"basta!"* There was a blazing row between government and people and, like most rows, it arose over a mistake. If anybody killed the carpenter's daughter, it wasn't the Foreign Minister's son. But the smouldering resentment of grinding poverty in the shadow of a great civilisation blazed up at the signs of corruption and oppression, of egoist values, within that civilisation. The same detachment from state and government which generates and rests on *omertà* among the people turned to a vociferous hostility at the signs of *omertà* within the state and government.

The girl died. Someone had a guess at who did it. Someone told the press. The press

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tried it on in an undertone, but the neurotics and adventurers caught the undertone and came to tell the press more. The press told the people aloud, and "yes," said the people. And the press went on shouting the groundless tidings over and over again in the echo-chamber of competition until all of Italy was deafened and hypnotised.

And then the Sepe Instruction and the Venice Trial. It is clear that the most fervent English admirer of Italy would not wish English justice to be modelled on Italian justice. The whole procedure, according to our ideas of evidence, was lamentable. But having said that the evidence wouldn't have stood up for a moment in an English court, we can then go on to say something more interesting.

The English judicial system expresses and takes account of the English character, the Italian judicial system of the Italian character. The assumption at an Italian trial is that there will be a conspiracy of silence, a prearranged blank area about which the truth will not be told. The court has to retreat as far as it thinks necessary in this or that direction, and then charge at the blank area along any road which seems to point towards it. Perjury is normal; it is the fruit of *omertà*. Witnesses turn up each with his own story or "version"; hence the gaudy and emotional technique of the confrontation of witnesses. The tolerance of hearsay also has its justification. The witnesses at the Venice trial, as at any big Italian trial, some of whom were illiterate or nearly so, might, it had to be admitted, have been subjected for four years to threats and corruption by their friends, by the press, by politically interested persons. If a witness may have been got at in one way or another for several years, it becomes important to check whether what he is saying now is the same as what he was saying then, and the only way to do that is by admitting hearsay.

As to the political overtones which were so apparent at the trial; one has to remember that day-to-day political struggles in Italy are not fought out only at the hustings, in Parliament, and in the press, but also in the courts and other institutions. That is just one of the facts of life. The doctrine of the separation of powers has never been particularly dear to the Latin peoples, and there is no doubt that the Montesi Trial will have, as it was intended by many people to have, an effect on the political balance of the country. This is not to say that it was an unjust trial, or that anybody was sacrified to the advancement of the Christian Democrat Party, or even that the primary judicial purpose was sacrificed to the secondary political purpose. Piccioni obviously didn't do it, and he was acquitted. That's the main thing.

But how on earth could any responsible authority ever have thought he did? How can Sepe have sent those men to trial? Well, nobody knows. The judicial enquiry which precedes an open trial is secret, and its findings are secret. That is the theory, and if a lot leaked out in practice, one still cannot assume that one knows enough to form a proper opinion.

NOW IN this paragraph I am going to describe what happened, not what I think anybody may have wanted to happen; I am describing effects, not imputing intentions. I said earlier that at the moment in the spring of 1954 when the judge at the Muto Trial opened the Caglio's "Testament," the tension in the country was at flashpoint. The Law Courts were surrounded by armed and motorised police, Parliament was in an uproar. It was less than a year since the Centre Government had suffered a substantial reduction of its majority. Everyone remembered that by no means all the arms had been given up by the Partisans after the Armistice of 1945, and that the larger part of those which had not were probably under Communist control. Communist arms dumps had been found at intervals since the war, but there was every reason to suppose that plenty were still left in caves in the mountains, in barns, even in backyards and under kitchen floors. And not only the Left had arms; there had, from time to time, been outbursts of violence by young neo-Fascists, and they too were armed in such a way as to suggest wartime

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caches. Violence comes suddenly in Italy and spreads fast, and it was very close then.

When Sepe was appointed to carry out the third judicial enquiry, he put the whole machine into reverse. It was believed that he was really going to clear everything up. The tension dropped, and there was no violence. When he announced his sentence and had Piccioni and Montagna arrested, the tension dropped still further. The outcome seemed to be a foregone conclusion. Then Sotgiu was discredited, and Piccioni and Montagna were released. But the public stayed quiet; they took it.

Two and a half years later, when people were at the least a bit ashamed of their earlier high passions, and at the most bored with the whole thing, the Venice Court showed that Piccioni was innocent and that Montagna, whatever his general moral character might be, had not been guilty of complicity in the girl's death. Again, Italy stayed quiet. The evidence was there; it had been investigated in open court, and it seemed conclusive. If there was any mystery left, it surrounded not the powerful and conspicuous men who had originally been accused, but the humble accountant Giuseppe Montesi.

But if Piccioni had been absolved in 1954, if, after hearing evidence in secret as the law required, an examining magistrate had for the third time announced that Wilma Montesi had just been paddling, the unrest would have burst out more violently than ever before. There might have arisen what the Communists call "an objective revolutionary situation." If the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party had indeed applied those words to the situation, it would have been bound by Leninist theory, as well as by common sense, to "exploit" it. It may be that Italy's still being on this side of the Iron Curtain is due to Piero Piccioni's undeserved ordeal. Whatever really happened in the inner counsels of the Italian Government, one has to observe that the course taken by the Montesi Affair over the last four years was such as to allow the greatest possible amount of public outcry, of blowing off steam, without positively toppling the country over into disorder. The country was ripe for upheaval, and it got it, but without bloodshed.

The Affair, the Scandal, is an accepted part of Latin political life, an unwritten procedure which is almost as important as the written parts of the constitutions of the multi-party republics. It is akin to that other unwritten but necessary part of political procedure, the revolution. Every true Affair is the ghost of a revolution, the lightning-conductor of violence, a miniature, bloodless convulsion. Here one can compare the body politic with the human body. If the revolution is the gross, obvious, critical illness of the body politic, the meningitis, the diphtheria, then the Affair is the psychosomatic headache or sore throat. As the hysterical syndrome apes the symptoms of the real disease, which it has learned and dwelled on, so does the Affair ape the symptoms of revolution; the outcry, the agitation, the convulsion, the floods of denunciation, the arduous moral reassessments. And as the hysterical syndrome does not kill the patient, nor does the Affair kill an old order or make way for a new. It is shadowplay.

But here the analogy breaks down. All the medical doctor can do is to distinguish between the real disease and the unconscious hysterical imitation; he can't decide whether his patient is to have the one or the other. A real disease has a very different origin from a hysterical imitation, but a revolution and an affair have the same origin; popular discontent. And it does seem possible that there was some political doctor at work in Italy who so contrived events that when discontent blew up, the deadly sickness of revolution was averted and the harmless hysteria of an affair was allowed to run its course instead. If so, we shall not know for years who it was or how he did it; but even allowing for luck he must have been a very able man.

And we must hope that he and his successors will remember that a psychosomatic headache provides no immunity against a real disease later.

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Letter from Puerto Rico

Planner's Punch

THE GUIDE straddled the outermost parapet of Morro Castle. He was pointing to the Atlantic where it takes on the lustrous sheen of the Caribbean. He drew attention to the ancient culverin and cannon, thrust through their embrasures and guarding the approaches to San Juan. He explained that if these guns had not torn Drake's canvas in 1595 and if the forces of George Clifford, third Earl of Cumberland, had not been enfeebled by dysentery in 1598, England might have won and held Puerto Rico. "Imagine us speaking Spanish with an Oxford accent!" The group which he was conducting through the castle, under the leisurely glances of American military police, broke into happy gusts of laughter. They were Puerto Rican nurses taking a day off from one of the island's new hospitals. They were jet black, wore starched white dresses, carried pointed black parasols against the incessant sun, and chattered like the hook-billed birds that inhabit the rain-forests in the interior. But then the guide, in his pith helmet and United States national parks uniform, took on a serious mien. He shepherded the tourists to a bastion from which they could view as a whole the white tiers and masonry of San Juan, the glimmer of the intervening harbour, and the dusky green of the mountains. Carefully he proclaimed that Puerto Rico owes its unique character and good fortune to its Spanish heritage and to its place in the Commonwealth of the United States.

Spanish dominion, which extended from the arrival of Ponce de León in 1508 to the landing of American troops three hundred and ninety years later, gave the island its language, its faintly moorish architecture, its cool churches, and the towers and escarpments which dot the promontories. It bequeathed to Puerto Rico the white and blue-tiled Casa d'Espagna where a small cluster of Castilian families gather to voice the suspicion that the Governor is a *parvenu* and to keep the language pure. But the Spanish legacy has also given Puerto Rico a sense of racial tolerance and harmony perhaps unmatched elsewhere. The Spaniards neither thought nor felt along lines of colour, and anyone arriving at San Juan's glistening new airport experiences a fine revelation. Black, white, and every intermediary shade of coffee and copper mingle with unconscious freedom. The blood of the Spaniards and Indians has been confounded with that of the Negroes whom their own masters set free voluntarily in 1873. Eleven thousand students, of every shade and physiognomy, work side by side in the spacious university of San Juan. The speaker of the Puerto Rican house is ebony black; his colleagues range from the yellowed ivory of the *hidalgos* to terra-cotta and jet.

Muñoz Marín, Puerto Rico's first elected Governor, is a massive personage, expansive and yet shrewd. He received me in his garden, high above the translucent stillness of the bay. He conceded that there might be isolated instances of racial snobbery among old families and of the inbred arrogance of lighter toward darker shades. But they hardly mattered. Puerto Rico was the only island in the Caribbean with neither *sahibs* nor colour bars. I asked whether Puerto Rico would maintain racial equality under the pressure of an ever-growing American community. Muñoz stared at one of the small tropical lizards stretched in the receding sunlight. Then he turned to me vivaciously: "Of course we shall. We are only a small country but we have something very real to contribute: the image of how white and coloured can live together in complete harmony." What did the Governor think of the chances of the British Caribbean Federation? He wished it well and knew some of its leaders personally. "But there are advantages that the British did not bring to their possessions."

He had in mind not only the heritage of Spain. For Puerto Rico owes much to its special relations with the United States. No other country on earth has a comparable partnership

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with Washington. In 1917 all Puerto Ricans were accorded American citizenship; in 1948 they elected their own Government for the first time; and in 1952, under the terms of a unique compact, Puerto Rico and the United States joined in a "commonwealth" relationship. This formula gives Puerto Ricans the best of several worlds. Internally, the government is in their own hands. But they are relieved from the costly anguish of having a foreign policy. American troops garrison Ramey Base, Fort Brooke, Fort Bundy, and the other stations along the shores. They play golf in the moat of Morro Castle and point their rocket-launchers across the crucial approaches to the Panama Canal. In the past, army engineers built superb roads and army doctors gave the island its high standard of sanitation. Today, contact and friction between military personnel and Puerto Ricans is slight. Muñoz held a reception in honour of the Casals Festival. It had all the props of a scene by Noel Coward: wild orchids, soft lights playing on the water, a sumptuous buffet, and the stars hanging very low. But not a single dress uniform or epaulette. I inquired. The Governor plucked at his benign moustache: "The reason is quite innocent. Generals and admirals aren't very interested in Bach."

PUERTO RICO derives immensely more than a sense of protection from its unique association with the United States. There are no tariff barriers for ninety-two per cent of its exports. Being American citizens, Puerto Ricans can go and work wherever they choose in the continental United States. San Juan receives substantial dollar aid from Washington, and if a hurricane tears down power lines, American naval units stand by with their generators. As the Governor and his Popular Democrats see it, the commonwealth situation is a brilliant one. The last three elections indicate that the great majority of Puerto Ricans agree. There is a rococo touch about the opposition parties. They appear to exist mainly because democracy, even in miniature, needs opposition. The Republicans want Puerto Rico to become the 49th State. Puerto Ricans would then have to pay Federal taxes like their less fortunate fellow-citizens on the mainland. "Who wants to pay taxes just so he can send a few Congressmen to Washington?" asks Muñoz. The Independents, on the contrary, want to break altogether with the United States: "Have you ever heard of such a crazy idea?" says the Governor.

Muñoz and his bustling ministers anticipate only two perils in their partnership with the United States. In the event of war, the island might well come under fire. "We might get blown up by an atom bomb. But I ask you, is that not preferable to being blown up when one Nicaraguan colonel tosses a hand grenade at another?" The other danger is economic. The island is geared entirely to the health of the dollar and quickly reflects the shock of recession on the mainland. But in fact, distance and the relative lack of sophistication in Puerto Rican monetary affairs seem to diminish the impact. As Mr. Barton, director of the Office of Economic Research, is eager to point out, the recession of 1953–54 was felt less sharply in Puerto Rico than on the continent.

With his sun-tan, his open-collar shirt, and swiftness of motion, Barton typifies the American team that is master-minding the Puerto Rican adventure. These men are ex-patriates with a gay vengeance. They refer to their former home as Siberia and have the unmistakable glint of academics let loose on the live materials of theory. They all emphasise that Puerto Rico's economic survival depends on a delicate balance between the emigration of islanders to the United States and the flow of American industry and capital into Puerto Rico. But they are confident that this balance can be achieved and that the miraculous progress of the last decade can be sustained.

The figures are nearly fantastic. Per capita income increased sixty-nine per cent between 1940 and 1954. The gross national product mushroomed to more than a billion dollars a year. That is the highest rate of economic progress recorded anywhere in the world. And the sense of forward motion is physical. The horizon bristles with new buildings and great scars of earth are laid bare when the slums are razed. The new housing developments encircle San Juan like a belt of utopia. Thirteen new hotels are under construction. At every moment incoming or departing planes roar low over the ancient walls.

And yet, at the very foundations of the Puerto Rican economy there is a cancer. Out of a total labour force of some 631,000, there are 89,000 unemployed and 156,000 working less than thirty-five hours a week. So far, these figures have remained fairly stationary. They cast doubt on the whole impression of prosperity. Puerto Rican leaders know this and have their answer to the challenge. They are persuaded that by 1975 enough new jobs will have been created to provide work for a population that will have been stabilised through a decline in the birth rate and continued migration to the United States. That is the blueprint for survival. The present is a stage of "dynamic transition."

HOW ARE the new jobs going to be created? "By importing industry, and yet more industry!" The result has been Operation

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Bootstrap, a fascinating story that throws a good deal of light on the economics of underdeveloped areas everywhere. Led by a staff of American industrialists and "public relations" consultants, Puerto Rico has sought to woo American firms away from the mainland. The main incentives are a ten-year exemption from taxes, an abundance of cheap labour, and one of the most serenely beautiful climates in the western hemisphere. Over the past six years, 550 American companies have harkened to the siren's song of the Economic Development Administration. Twenty "ambassadors," with headquarters in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles are presently negotiating with 1,500 American businesses in the hope of tempting them to their island-in-the-sun. Wherever one travels in Puerto Rico, Operation Bootstrap is a visible reality. Factories on which the paint is wet are belching smoke against the incongruous background of palm-fringed beaches and tropical forests. In every bar and hotel lobby in San Juan, Americans are sipping rum-cocktails while eager Puerto Ricans load the tables with maps and government pamphlets. Already, the *Fomento* programme has created 35,000 new jobs and raised per capita income from $285 a year to $442. When Mr. Moscoso, director of the EDA, outlines the future, he can hardly keep the excitement out of his sober and trenchant voice. By 1975 there should be 2,500 new plants in operation. That would mean that the miracle had been accomplished; there would be jobs for all. The island, with 2,400,000 inhabitants, could then be economically viable.

A tremendous lot of hard work and enforced paternalism lies behind this dream. San Juan, with its 300,000 inhabitants, has doubled in size in the last decade. The government does not want a "one-city island" and is resolved to spread the benefits of new industry to the dormant south coast, and the less accessible communities of the interior. Firms willing to establish their plants away from the metropolis, in the provinces of Humacao or Guayama, near the old city of Ponce or outside Mayaguez, receive special subsidies and land-grants in addition to the general freedom from taxes. Between 1950 and 1953 San Juan absorbed 46 per cent of the new industrial jobs; in the following three years, that total was reduced to 24 per cent. Furthermore, Moscoso and his planners are trying to create an "integrated" industrial pattern. They are seeking to attract complementary industries, such as fibres, petro-chemicals, and plastics. In that way, Puerto Ricans trained in one type of factory could be used elsewhere. As more advanced economies have found out, this kind of integration is very difficult to achieve.

Operation Bootstrap has its debit side. Nearly a quarter of the companies that originally transplanted factories to Puerto Rico have since retreated to the United States. Some fifteen miles from San Juan, on the road to the rain-forests of El Yunque, one sees such an abandoned factory, its new glass and untarnished chrome shining empty in the sun. Of the plants in operation, moreover, nearly 50 per cent are earning profits mainly because of the initial tax exemption. Why?

In part, because the early flush of enthusiasm brought a good many enterprises which were unsound, fly-by-night companies in pursuit of a quick dollar. Puerto Rican hospitality is now becoming more selective. In part, because American engineers and managers had underestimated the height of the language barrier and the cost of training unskilled labour. But essentially, Operation Bootstrap is threatened by the dilemma of wages. American employers are drawn to Puerto Rico by the lure of cheap labour. Muñoz and his party are determined to attract industry in order to raise the standard of living. In the last analysis, the two purposes are contradictory. With every increase in wages, Puerto Rico becomes less attractive to the outside manufacturer. At present the gap between island and mainland is still an inducement. Industrial wages in Puerto Rico average seventy cents an hour, or thirty cents less than the legal minimum wage in the United States. But it is narrowing steadily. As one American manager put it: "What brought us down here was the feudal system. Now it's ending. Why should we stay?" In fact, the island is becoming too progressive; the unions are gaining in power. A man might do better if he built his factory in Alabama or Mississippi. There, the past is still in force.

THE MOMENT of truth will come during 1958 when the ten-year tax holiday ends for several of the first plants to be constructed under the *Fomento* scheme. How many will close up and return to the United States? That is the question which the planners debate in their air-cooled offices in the Banco Popular. The pundits argue that "there is little reason to expect a large-scale closing." They calculate that 56 per cent of the factories started in any given year will still be producing (perhaps under new management) ten years later. Of these, some 8 per cent are expected to fold up at the end of their tax exemption. That should be more than counter-balanced by the creation of new industries.

As a model it looks good. But it presumes a formidable run of luck. What Puerto Ricans are not always prepared to admit is that their present gains and future expectations depend on a

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coincidence of elements, many of which are unstable or outside their control. They depend on the fact that marine freight rates are very low: it is cheaper to transport certain goods from San Juan to Boston than overland from New York to Boston. But marine rates are fickle. Secondly, Puerto Rican thinking is based on the persistence of the American boom. As long as the United States rides high on the tide of prosperity and increasing consumer demand, there will be factories in search of new locations and 135,000 visitors a year in pursuit of trade winds and planter's punch. But what happens if the boom collapses or loses impetus? What happens when American trade unions are prepared to take wage cuts in order to retain their jobs? Puerto Rican economists don't appear to ask that question. The fact of American prosperity has become a mental habit.

That applies, above all, to the problem of migration. Seventy thousand Puerto Ricans emigrate to the United States each year. Muñoz and his colleagues speak of "the free movement of American citizens within the Commonwealth" and point out that many Puerto Ricans return either on visits or after a spell of work. That is true, and during the Christmas season of 1956–57, 202,000 more people arrived on the island than left it. But it is not the important part of the truth: the survival of Puerto Rico is closely dependent on the fact that some 70,000 inhabitants give up their homes each year to seek a new life in the United States. When pressed hard, one senior official finally admitted to me that "without this annual safety-valve, Puerto Rico would explode." Gripping their bundles and battered suit-cases, long rows of Puerto Ricans, many of them from the dying farms in the interior, board the planes to New York.

There, more than half a million of their countrymen are already amassed. As soon as they land, the process of exploitation begins. Housing agents and loan sharks are at hand to pack them into what are rapidly becoming some of America's most sombre slums. Labour bosses and shyster politicians prey on their bewilderment and their ignorance of English. Many of the white men they will have to deal with, policemen, shopkeepers, or landlords, treat them like encroaching dirt.

And with this invasion of Puerto Ricans into New York, relations between Washington and San Juan are bound to suffer. Puerto Rico is becoming the American Jamaica. Only some Negroes regard the new arrivals with a measure of grim satisfaction. Here, at last, is a minority even lower on the social scale than themselves. Puerto Rican janitors can be seen at work in Negro office buildings. And whatever the resistance of the whites, Spanish has become New York City's second language. The term "Puerto Rican," which only a few years ago evoked visions of a distant vacation land under an American flag, now stands for a complex of racial bitterness and social distaste.

Puerto Rican officials either do not realise this or are unwilling to discuss the consequences. The Governor simply declares that common citizenship entails freedom of motion between the island and the continent. Such freedom could not be abrogated without destroying the basis of the commonwealth formula. Puerto Rico is so densely peopled that if everyone in the world moved to the United States that country would then be as crowded as Puerto Rico is now. Why, therefore, should Puerto Ricans not follow the labour market wherever it may lie? Muñoz is sorry that there are slums in New York, but that is not a Puerto Rican problem.

Logically, he is right. But fear and prejudice are poor logicians. An American Congress that has passed laws discriminating against naturalised citizens and States that have devised restrictive legislation of every kind when it suited their needs, will not lack means of proceeding against Puerto Ricans if the influx gets out of hand. Thus, Puerto Rico's subtle and unique association with the United States is endangered every time immigrants turn another New York street into a ragged slum or compel a group of white parents to withdraw their children from schools in which Spanish has taken over. It is a tragic dilemma. The Puerto Ricans are suited neither to the climate of New York nor to its business jungle. Even in the worst shanties on the island sunshine and mangoes are free. The only thing free in New York is a night at the police station.

MIGRATION, moreover, is subject not only to legal barriers. It can be all but destroyed if a depression sets in. Even during the very minor set-back to the American economy in 1953–54, it declined from 70,000 to 20,000. If Puerto Ricans could no longer find jobs on the continent—even bad jobs at low pay—they would stay put. The results would be fairly catastrophic. The equilibrium between population and employment, which is the goal of Puerto Rico's economic venture, could not be achieved. This means that the long-range answer is not Operation Bootstrap. It is birth-control.

Muñoz knows it and refers proudly to the decline in the birth-rate from 43 per thousand in 1947 to some 34 per thousand at present. But, in fact, this decline has been due mainly to the transfer of segments of the population from agriculture to industry. Despite the free clinics and the dissemination of literature, the birth-control programme as such has made little head-

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way. Not, as one might suppose, because nearly 90 per cent of the island is Catholic. Outside the see of Ponce, the power of the church is insignificant. Rather, because the notion of a large family—the average is five children—is implicit in the Puerto Rican's sense of self-respect. It is a joyous affirmation and runs deep. If education and a change in the island's way of life are to overcome this feeling, the consequences will probably be felt very slowly.

These are long-range problems and it is understandable that Puerto Ricans should dismiss them with some impatience. For prosperity has brought its own challenges and the planners are grappling with them. Prices are high, fantastically high. Food prices are between 12 and 20 per cent above those in the United States. Nor is this solely an echo of the general dollar inflation. The Puerto Rican economy is caught in its own spiral. It is growing too fast. Buildings sprout out of the ground; in San Juan streets are torn up incessantly to make way for broader avenues. With every new factory a new group of consumers enters the market, and it is a market that has to import many of its basic staples. These consumers are from the farms and the neglected towns. The metropolis draws them even to its slums.

The planners have devised a number of ingenious ideas calculated to lower prices and to decentralise the new urban population. Supermarkets and suburban shopping centres are being built as rapidly as possible. The small shops and middlemen who have plagued the island's economy will be driven out and Puerto Ricans will receive the benefits of modern marketing without having to move into San Juan. Muñoz has also fostered another idea worthy of *Candide*: in order to discourage Puerto Ricans from leaving the interior, the government will not build the great north–south highway originally planned! Any man wishing to lead his wife, his children, and his goat to the city will have to brave the narrow roads and the hair-pin turns.

So far, these schemes and self-denials have shown few results. Prices in the super-markets are still far above comparable prices in the United States and Moscoso is beginning to think of draconian measures. Too many Puerto Ricans are changing too quickly from their traditional diet of beans and cod-fish. Their demands drive prices to new heights. And the march on the city continues despite the bad roads and the government's attempts to decentralise industry. Up to forty families a week are being transferred from the swamp-belted shanties of San Juan to new housing projects. But one Puerto Rican told me that for every human being moved out, some ten peasants seep in from the land to fill the vacated slum. The dynamic American journalist who directs the official news service declared that this figure was preposterous. I wonder.

MR. EDWARD R. MURROW recently came to the island. He compared the atmosphere to that of Israel—in both countries immense energies are harnessed to the controlling intelligence and the social conscience. But somehow there is a difference. Puerto Rican programmes remind one of the symbol that Conrad uses in *The Heart of Darkness*: a small cruiser lobbing cannon shells into a vast jungle. The instruments are out of proportion to the needs. The new factories employ 150 people here and 175 there: 240,000 Puerto Ricans lack adequate jobs. The birth-rate *is* declining among the new middle classes: but for every Puerto Rican who dies, five new ones are born. And that is why so many have to leave this beautiful island and live—ten in one rat-infested room—in the blackness of uptown New York.

That is the heart of the problem, and when cornered by these figures Puerto Ricans tend to argue that the necessary changes will come about through education. Rightly, they take immense pride in the fact that the country has nearly 3,000 schools, three universities, and that a third of the annual budget goes towards educating the people. Wherever one turns, in the crowded streets of San Juan or in the foothills of the Cordillera Central, the sign *Escuela* meets the eye. Sometimes there seem to be more schools than houses: schools ranging from high-walled convents to the glass cheese-boxes of engineering and aeronautic "academies." Students swarm from every nook and cranny: girls in blue uniforms, young men in open-collar shirts, black and white, cream and copper, bustling together in what is the island's finest industry.

From an early age on, children are taught bi-lingually and the Muñoz régime hopes to reduce to a very small number those Puerto Ricans who stare at an English-speaking visitor in mute bewilderment. The University of San Juan is rapidly becoming one of the most distinguished in Central and Latin America. Alleys of tall palms lead from one white building to the next. The library is an architect's dream—glass walls and spacious stairs, light-filled seminar rooms and accessible shelves. It appears to be particularly well stocked in sociology, social psychology, and all those half-sciences that characterise the upsurge of underdeveloped areas. But a great effort is being made to build up more ancient resources and on the literature shelves Dr. Leavis is fully represented.

In the final analysis, statistics don't tell the whole story. The air in this intriguing island

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is infectious with optimism and the conviction that extraordinarily difficult problems can and will be solved. "Give us fifteen years. That's all we ask!" say the planners. And one begins agreeing with them. Perhaps it is the effect of the trade winds blowing between the palms and the ever-present sun. Perhaps it is the riot of colour and abundance in the forest: the grapefruit ripening on the bent trees, the cascading motion of the giant ferns, the thrust of bamboo through the scarlet and tawny parasites. Growth is everywhere: in the tall scaffoldings of San Juan or among the wild gardenias which children sell by the side of the roads. The Puerto Ricans improvise with genius. When they decided to turn a part of the rain-forest into a national park, they discovered an excess of serpents. Promptly, they imported mongooses. Now there are no serpents but too many mongooses. Somehow, one feels that they will solve that problem too.

Luck is with them. Geography has given Puerto Ricans the right of being heard in Washington, for they are strategically placed along the firing-range of experimental American missiles and across the approaches to the Panama Canal. And even in small things the spirits of the island are benevolent. Had Pablo Casals suffered his heart attack a few days before he did, thousands of visitors from all over the world would have cancelled their bookings. A tremendous investment would have collapsed. As it was, music lovers could no longer change their plans and came anyway.

On the opening night, Governor Muñoz was late and was not allowed to enter his box until the Bach suite had been completed. He remarked to his entourage that the incident characterised Puerto Rico: "We are so democratic that I am not allowed to disturb the audience, but we don't manage to solve the traffic problem that made me late in the first place!"

The traffic problem on Ponce de León Avenue will be solved. I am less certain about what will happen on 110th Street in New York City. That is where Puerto Rico really begins and the portents are ugly. What will happen when the tenement-lords and sweat-shop operators no longer require new immigrants to prey upon? What will happen when New York City will no longer agree to keep some 55,000 Puerto Ricans on relief and decide that half a million migrants is enough? What will happen on the island if and when the United States economy enters a downward cycle? No one really knows the answers. But as I watched what Eugene O'Neill called "the moon of the Caribbees" rising over Luquillo beach, I stopped asking.

George Steiner

TO S.B.
ON HER BAPTISM

* * * *

Birth come fresh upon this face,
Touch it now as time and all time close
In one. Trap the toying wind that blows
Soft in her lifting hair and catch the rain
That cools her. Take clouds that chase
The days; call the sun to grace
Her now. Use all seasons with the refrain
Of their repeating years. All times close
In this, time now whole and in repose.
Birth comes fresh upon her face.

Ronald Tamplin

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Elizabeth Montagu

From Me to You

A Story

IT SEEMS to me that I am a person quite out of the ordinary and I feel older than I appear to be, although I know quite well that if you passed me in the street, or sat opposite to me in a restaurant, or saw me walking in the country through a field of corn, you would think no more of me than you might think of any young person of no particular denomination, with no great looks and without a striking personality. Probably you would think only —there goes someone else. You would see, I dare say, a young person of medium height, with brown hair not yet prematurely grey; a person who leans forward a little when walking as a sailor may lean against a high sea. You would see a slightly round-shouldered individual whose head looks younger than the rest of the body which is thin yet stocky, clumsy but with a certain grace; a body once accustomed to living a different kind of life.

That is what you would see. And you would pass this person (who is myself) with no more than a casual glance. You would give me no more than a moment of your attention depending on whether or not your mind was free to observe the passers-by, depending on whether or not you were alone. If you were alone and your mind unpreoccupied then you might, I believe, notice me. And you might, perhaps, wonder for a moment who I am or who, once upon a time, I might have been. You might look at me curiously, with enough curiosity I mean, to make me look at you before going on my way. And if you looked closely at me I think you would notice the way I looked back at you. You would realise that I look bewildered as if you (the person I was looking at) was not yourself, not an interested or disinterested stranger but someone totally different. I would look at you in the way people look at you in a dream—in your dreams and in mine too. I would look at you in the way people look at another when they are looking for someone else. This is because ever since I can remember I have been looking for someone—for someone else.

But this need not upset you (whoever you are). It has nothing to do with you. I have nothing against you as a person, how could I have? since I do not know you. No, the reason is simple enough. You seem to me to be a stranger passing by among a million other strangers, although I know quite well that in time I might come to know you and to love you all. That I don't do so is my fault and I know it, but you see the trouble is if I came to know you any better you might begin to ask me too many questions, and I have had my life-share of questioning so . . . do you mind?

I suppose that it is this particular attitude of mine which has made me feel out of the ordinary and old. My real age there is no point in telling you. How could it make a difference? Say simply that I am young enough to feel old and old enough to know what it feels like to be young. I would ask you, please, to leave it at that but for one thing—

If and when we do come across one an-

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other: if you should pass me on a moving staircase, or see me at a party sitting alone somewhere and looking as if I wanted not to be alone, and if you should go so far as to speak to me (asking me, perhaps, a few elementary questions in order to find out who I am) then, please, be content with whatever I shall tell you about myself because, if you press me, I may have to tell you lies. You may get what you imagine to be the truth if you succeed in making me—say—drunk enough? but you will never get me to tell you whatever it is that you want to know.

I am sorry about this and you must believe me when I say that it won't be because I am withholding anything from you, far from it. I shall talk quite freely and sincerely. I shall even be able (for a short time) to believe, and to make you believe, that I am speaking the truth. But all the same what I do tell you will be either not quite true or not good for either of us to know.

So let it ride, will you? and whenever we meet talk to me about unimportant things. Talk to me about anything in the world which interests you apart from myself. Will you do that?

I should like you to tell me things.

You could gossip with me, for instance, should we happen to have any mutual gossip or you could talk shop to me should we happen to share the same shop. We may find that we have a lot in common. Tell me what those wicked French Men were up to during the Suez Crisis or what your opinion is of The Angry Young Men who write those books and plays about Anger. Take me to a concert or to the Opera—the latest preferably by Benjamin Britten—and explain to me why you were unable to buy that Sutherland you so much admired. Tell me whether you have met any member of The Royal Family and, if so, what they are like. Tell me how many miles it is from Jerusalem to Teheran and what you believe Bacon meant by that rather ambiguous statement (*The Tempest*, I believe it is? Line fifty, Act four, Scene one). Tell me how much it would cost to buy one of those new Italian typewriters and whether Fortnum and Mason is really the only place to buy French Petits Pois and ties. You could tell me what to read, what to listen to, and where to walk. You could tell me about your children. I shall be very interested in that.

How many children have you got and how old are they? Tell me, where did you meet your wife, and when? Is she beautiful, do you think? Or was she beautiful when you first married her and now is somehow less beautiful because you have known her so long? Is your child like her or, as you prefer to think, like your Mother? Do you care whom the child looks like or are you quite prepared for him to look like no one but himself? Tell me.

You could tell me, too, what time you get up in the morning and at which end of the bath you prefer to sit. Tell me all that, but no more. Don't tell me any more than that. I don't want you to tell me whether or not you are happy. I shall be able to tell that one for myself.

It would be fun to go to espresso bars with you, perhaps to an American Musical! to the Dogs. And I should like to be able afterwards (after whatever it is that we have done together) to eat well and to sleep well. I should like to go to Switzerland with you next winter. Although I do not know how to ski, I could ride on a sleigh or a toboggan, couldn't I? and I know how to walk.

I would even be prepared to go horse-back riding in Richmond Park providing the horse was quiet and not one of those creatures who play tug-o'-war with me like everyone else.

But if you are tired of the life you have been living I would be willing to go into the depths of the country with you—to the West Country, please, where I am told that people still lead a simple life. I should enjoy walking there carrying a gun even if there was nothing to shoot. It would be delightful to sit in an isolated cottage by an open fire among paraffin lamps even if I had to chop the wood and clean the lamps myself. We could eat a great deal. I should enjoy that.

I should enjoy very much planting the early potatoes and picking the early peas: watching the beginnings of vegetable life

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pushing their way into the outside world. I should enjoy that just as I would enjoy the sea in the late summer when the ground is browning off before the leaves fall to cover it, and when the apples are ready to make into the rough cider which one cannot drink until a February night. I should enjoy seeing the black velvet sloes growing which, once picked and pricked, turn the colourless liquid in the bottle slowly into Sloe Gin.

If you are still kind to me, not asking me too many questions, I would enjoy listening to such things as "The Goon Show" or "The Archers" in any small detached or semi-detached house that you choose to live in. But if you don't like the idea of living in Television Land or in one of the convenient suburbs of that Midland City, then I am quite prepared to meet you once a week in the middle of the night. I will meet you in a car in Hyde Park, in a small back room, or on a stone seat somewhere on the Embankment providing it is not too cold. I will take you for a ride on a switchback—or you can take me. Or we could go on the roundabout, sit among the children and the hurdy-gurdy music on one of those strange animals, half-dragon and half-horse—the ones who look so fierce while riding gently up and down.

We could do anything really, go anywhere you like, whatever you propose, so long as we both enjoy ourselves and live in the present, and so long as you don't ask me where I come from or who I am supposed to be. Because—those kind of questions (remember the fairy stories?) are not designed to be answered and I have had that kind of questioning although I am not so old.

•

BUT OF COURSE the trouble is—(and I know it)—that like the Prince or Princess of the fairy story, you won't be able to leave it at that, leave me be. Why? Oh, because you—(if you are like me)—you won't be able to help it. You won't be able to resist trying to get to know me. Even if you are one of those rare people who will pass me by on the other side of the street; one of those people who, looking over their shoulder, think no more than "there goes someone walking," there will still be someone else: someone like you and yet not like you who will pick me up, who will look at me and value me with the value that is always placed upon the casual pick-up, the unknown person who holds, for a moment, a certain charm just because the Unknown holds the Charm. Then that Someone will suggest that we go together to Singapore, to Labrador—to the U.S.A. And I shall be taken to a hot country or to a cold country because a travel book has to be written about what it is like to be there; to be there with me or without me, perhaps (for I shall not be mentioned), in this country or in that. Or it may be that a business will have to be attended to: a scene shot, a performance given. Something accomplished. Something done.

During this time I shall probably find myself alone or with others in such places as an overcrowded cinema; a place conditioned or air-conditioned or thick with the smoke of a thousand fag ends. I might be being prevented from suffering with a James Dean by ice creams, or be talking to people who cannot listen at such places as gatherings or receptions where, I suspect, nothing happens that does not happen more effectively somewhere else.

I don't like the idea of where I might be or of what I might be doing there or anywhere else. It will be pretty dreadful.

On the other hand it might be worse.

I might find myself high up somewhere in a gallery looking down on a great semi-circle full of people trying to put something over: trying to put over or across (their opponents or the People, the Press or themselves) an explanation, a solution, a point to it all.

Or I might find myself somewhere hot and dark where a band is rockin' or rollin' out some old-time dance tune which, since its conception, has been corrupted or distorted from whatever it was originally meant to be. A great crowd of children will be there not so much listening as drinking it in. A host of people will be there who do not know any better or anywhere else to be. How could they know any better? or know how

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much better it was before they happened to be?

But again it might be worse still—

I might be alone in a cold ditch, on a cold street—alone on the top of a bus. I might be covering myself with an old newspaper pretending to be asleep, or be purposefully walking along across a public place pretending that I had somewhere to go. I might be picking up something in order to forget how little I wanted to read. I might, on a dark night, be alone in a stifling brothel trying to forget the feeling of being on one's own. I would be there in order to prove to someone (who might be you), to prove against my own belief and your better judgment how I was not so alone. I might at this moment be pushing a swing-door, making my way along a passage and through a smell of cheap scent to a made-up railway carriage in which, I'm told, some creatures (through some perverted and forgotten association) find it easier to make love. Without knowing why I might be jiggetting up and down in such a place to find opposite to me and also jiggetting up and down—You. The person whom I have been looking for in my imagination ever since I was born.

But even if you were there, whoever you are, wherever it is—even if you were there, my only love, I would still feel alone and be facing a situation that seems always to be changing, I suppose because of the perpetual change in me.

What a pity, you are thinking. Poor chump, you think. The trouble with the poor soul, the poor devil, is that something, at some point, must have gone seriously wrong.

Very well, I say to you behind the red curtain, by the tow-path, on the cellar stairs, I grant you that. But what am I to do about it? What are you going to do about it? I have to tell you the story of my life after all? Has it come to that? What I warned you of in the beginning is really taking place?

*

WHERE did it go wrong . . . ?

Was it the moment, I ask myself, when with a great sense of fear and with a wrench I found myself forced from a warm dark place and out into the cold? Or was it during the time when I would wake up somewhere green and begin to feel hungry so that I cried to have the hunger satisfied?

Or was it later when I woke up again to find myself in a hot wet bed, a bed that did not seem to be mine? so that I felt ashamed to be lying there and cried to be moved, only to find myself sitting on a cold stone where it was too late to put right the wrong that had been done?

Or was it the day I was dressed up in white? Dressed up to kill? The time I had been chosen to represent other children at the fête. That was the time I found out that the prize I was to give away was as white and as pure as I was, pure male and three times my size; a great white cockerel which I had to hold for no more than a minute but which, all the same, I must have held too tightly or too long. Because it flapped and pecked at me, at *me*, a brother, as I thought yet an enemy. Was that the day?

Oh, it could have been, it seems to me now, one of so many things. It could have been the horror of a dark night; the loss of one of a pair of galoshes down a rabbit hole; the sound of wicked footsteps coming up a polished stair. It could have been the noise of no human thing moving along grey linoleum or the finger-prints I thought a ghost had left upon a cupboard door. It might have been a green snake sliding away from beneath a child's hand or the blood in the loft that was never explained.

It might have been the unfamiliar sight of a pregnant woman: a forgotten present: cruel words spoken in a moment of temper by anyone under the sun.

And now I come to think of it, it may have been the fear of the flowers in the herbaceous border; they were like the curtain pattern which day after day frowned down upon the small punishments of a child. But I am not convinced that it was any of these things. Children live and die a thousand times over, God help them, in worlds without end.

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SO I AM older now. I say—

"If you really want to know the truth, I never been kissed. I never kissed anyone neither although most of the kids around here have had a feel or a go. Some of 'em like it, and others say that there's no need to go for anything of that sort. The ones that like it don't look any different than what they did before. The boys swagger around and the girls giggle the same as they always did. My sister once told me all about it and what it was like, but I now discovered that she never done it but only got it out of books. My brother, the one what was always saying he'd never have anything to do with girls, he's got hisself spliced now and seems to get along all right with his old woman what he calls her. She's not pretty nor anything but they got kids which don't come by the stork express so I heard.

"I got a classy job at the moment although what they do upstairs I've not taken the trouble to find out. They pay all right. Seven quid a week or something. I take it home and give it Mum and she hands me out the change on a Saturday night when I go and spend time out some place with the gang. I don't drink but most of 'em drink it all up—Pete for instance. He can get outside four or five in less time than it takes to pull one out cool. Which reminds me of how we got into a spot of trouble the other night. Not up West. Round about here for a change. I just about split-arsed up the Cut before the bogeys come. I lay low for a time after that feeling low like as if I was going to get you know what or some such. I know what the gang think but I don't bleeding well care what they think. Not half I don't."

*

Some years later—and I'm working very hard training to be a nurse. The hospital is very large but people seem quite nice. I say so in a letter to you. I say I'm quite all right, darling Mummy, so you're not to worry. I thank you for the hot-water bottle which arrived safely. I tell you about the other girls in my set and say that Sister seems quite decent although of course it's a bit soon to tell. It is cold and the hospital corridors are endless and my feet hurt. It all seems to be cold corridors and green paint and smells but I suppose I shall get used to it in time. I wonder how Daddy is and whether his ulcer is better. You are to tell him not to eat hard things and please to give my love to Trim. Give him a huge kiss from me and tell him to behave while I'm away and not chase those cats!

"Lots and heaps and piles of love from—Pat."

I write all that to you during the first week. I don't tell you what I am really feeling and thinking because I don't want you to fuss. You are not the sort of person anyway I tell things to. I only tell things to Trim. He doesn't give things away like some people I know and I like to talk into those long silk ears of his. I'm home sick but I suppose it will wear off. I'm all right really just as most people of my age are really all right.

*

HOLD ON. Wait a minute. It's not as simple as all that.

You've been listening to the hell of a lot of talk so listen to me for a bit. You've been told all about childhood, plenty of drip. A load of spume about herbaceous borders and upper class fêtes and kids being scared of the same things. That's all cock. I don't know whoever-it-is who's been unloading it onto you but you don't want to fall for that. How can someone like that know one corner of what I know? with their this and that and their that and this that they all tell their dear Mas and Pas about? I know. All nice and clean and dandy in the wood-shed—if there is a wood-shed. Nuts!

Listen while I tell you something a propos of what that bloke said in the beginning. What was it? Something about being old enough to feel young and young enough to do the reverse. Yeah, that's it. That's a bull! I feel old while all these other people you're always talking to don't feel old at all. Can't you see it? All that C. for Confucius phoney stuff! Why, the whole point of the thing is —all children feel old. As old as God from

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Whom, Where, or Whence (according to a lot of erudite gentlemen) children come. Get it?

Simple enough but I'm talking wide. Actually I'm serious about this. Deadly serious.

I'll tell you again how old I am. I'm twenty-two and one half précisément perché. Like a Corbeau. But I'm serious.

The thing is you've got to treat me seriously and not as if I were a kid which I know I was the first time you met me. But some water has flowed by since then and although I admit you're older than me you are less older than me than you were. You've got to try to speak the same language as me instead of pretending to slip away. Of course I know why you do it. You're terrified that I might tell you I loved you. But if I ever did get it said—which is unlikely—you'd find a splendid way of dealing with it. You'd say, of course, that it was impossible and that I was too young to know what I was saying. You'd say it was outrageous even to think such a thing in the circumstances. And by saying that, my darling, you'd be admitting what you are always pretending not to admit to; you would be assuming that I meant "in love." What makes you assume any such thing? Why should I not say "I love you" and mean that I love you as a dutiful son should love the woman who married his father. It would all be beautifully right and normal—that.

I imagine you remember the last time we met? That pub off the Kings Road. It was one of the corniest places I could think of to take you to and we had one of the corniest conversations there that any two people are likely to have between the war that is coming and the next. You were dressed up to kill in a white get-up although it wasn't summer—or was it? You were dressed up for the country as if you lived in it for Chrisake. But I suppose it's easy to look like that if you do look like that. Too easy.

You kept telling me that I read too many American novels. That was a good beginning. You seemed worried about me thinking that I wasn't living the right sort of life. You said (as if you wondered) that you wondered whether it might not be partly your fault. You sounded sorry. Like hell you did! It made me wonder whether it might not be your fault too. As I wasn't—at that point—prepared to get all hipped about being mine own executioner I thought I'd settle for you being my executrix (if there is such a word). I settled for a lot that evening. I watched the way you looked about you, the way you looked at other people, the way you looked at yourself. I watched you watching me. You were so miserable weren't you, my darling? just in case I might say or do something to put you on the spot. My God! were we respectable! We didn't even drink.

No, we just sat there and wondered what other people were saying about us sitting there. As if it mattered!

I'm wondering now whether there is any point in meeting again. Maybe I'll emigrate.

SO WHERE are we now? Where are we meeting one another in this moment of time? Set the stage where you like. We are right up to date. But I should like you to choose the time and the place. Just make it somewhere a little out of the ordinary.

You choose a desert island? Oh, no, don't choose that. What is so extra-ordinary about a desert island? And don't choose an apple tree in your orchard because the bough of an apple tree is not too comfortable for the not so young. We might meet on the Comet or in a doctor's consulting room except that the one would give us too much anxiety and the other would be too brief. How about meeting in a cataclysm? During the dropping of the atomic bomb or while drowning? Or would that be too cataclysmic? Yes, I think so. How about a train? The early morning mail? or the late night final express? Shall we meet in a non-smoker? No, you smoke. And you don't talk to people in trains. Then you choose a place to meet. I won't speak any more. You choose.

So we are both of us on a journey? A journey which is approaching an end? Good. During the journey we look at one another in

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the way people do look at one another when there is a mutual attraction there. As we are alone together and time is getting short the prospect of being parted forever unless one of us speaks makes me say so. I say that I think we are more or less on time.

Yes, you say as you look at your watch, we are more or less up to date.

You don't think it may be later than we think? I say and you say that it depends what I mean by late.

I like that and so I lean forward and ask you if you have read a book called "Alice Through the Looking Glass." You have read it but not for a long time. You don't remember the Red Queen. But it doesn't matter because already we have begun to talk about something else. We talk about schedules and how difficult it is this question of time. The question of timing too is extremely difficult. Life is difficult you say and I agree with you. I say that one of the things which makes it peculiarly difficult is this sense of rush and the feeling of being left behind. You say that you find it quite otherwise. What you find is that there are too many long periods in which nothing happens, nothing at all. And I agree with that. We are getting along awfully well together don't you think?

But you keep looking at your watch and so I realise that only by interesting you can I prevent all those thoughts from clattering through your brain. Because you talk all the time, don't you? You talk to yourself when you are by yourself? So do I. Although I'm not such a great talker in public, in company, even if you think I am. You are thinking now that I'm trying to pick you up on a journey. You know what it will all lead to and so you wish it was over—the journey. You wish you were safe at home.

We are home then, you and I. We are in your home. We are there because since it is your home it is mine too. Otherwise it wouldn't be home or I wouldn't be there—if you see what I mean.

I'm not there all the time. I go out sometimes. When I am there you wish I went out more often. When I am not there you wish I did not go out so much but stayed sometimes at home. There isn't much room in the house or it is too large and we worry about money. How are we going to make the two ends of the week meet? One of the children is somewhere you don't approve of and the other one is somewhere I don't think I would approve of if I knew where she was. The child who is like you, he works too hard. Look at him. Like me he never seems to have a moment to himself. The only thing, the only proper thing when you are young is to be young and have a good time.

So we go to the Victoria Palace for a good time. We go to see the Marx Brothers, to see Danny Kaye. We read "Three Men in a Boat" and P. G. Wodehouse to get a really good belly-aching laugh. We talk to the girl in the local who isn't half comical and to the man who is a wit. We talk to pretty well anyone who will make us feel happy to be alive. Because it isn't so difficult the business of being alive. It can be rather terrific. "James' Lagonda . . . have you been in it? It's super! It'll do a hundred and ten. Terrific!" It's terrific too to see a school of porpoises with a sense of purpose, and it's terrific to read and understand Dylan Thomas for the first time. "God! how that man can write!" You can have the whale of a time if you know how to before the journey is over and before the world ends.

It's only a question of practice, a question of experience, a question of time.

So we needn't be afraid to go back, you and I, to the dark places or to the green shades. We can take hunger and cold and we can revisit the frightening flower border, the cellar stair, and the rabbit hole. Because we can always have a pillow fight or pretend.

We could pretend that it might be fun to meet. It might prove to be true. And so, stranger, if you are prepared to meet me I'll meet you.

How about it?

Or are you going to pass me by on the other side?

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

ITEMS:—Mikhail Sholokhov, during his recent visit to Sweden, was to have been interviewed on the Swedish radio. However, two officials from the Soviet Embassy, who accompanied Sholokhov to the studio, prevented him from answering the questions put to him.... The re-establishment of the proletarian dictatorship in Hungary has been accompanied by the presentation of the following plays and operettas in the theatres of Budapest: *The Princess of Czardash, The Princess of Gerolstein, The Count of Luxembourg,* and *The Countess Maritza*—all of them written during the reign of the late Franz Josef.

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KIRSANOV'S poem, *Seven Days of the Week*, printed in *Novy Mir* before the present tightening of controls, has become the object of a campaign of official abuse. There is some plain speaking in it:

On the first day
Sprang the desire
For a sunny meeting
Ending at midnight,
For a long, long talk,
At last to speak openly
Without secret whispers:
"Nothing bad can happen!"
The desire for integrity
And honest opinions....

On the second day the hero of the poem is reminded that

No opinions should arise
Without official directives....

And on the seventh day

A lie, masked as a heart, is insolently sold
To the public, which surrenders to the fraud....

*

AMERICA and Poland:—

(a) A Polish journalist, remarking that the American exhibit at the Poznan fair was "the one most criticised by the press and the most attended by the public, the two things being not unconnected," went on to make a sardonic comment on American propaganda to East Europe:

"Propaganda is necessary where people have to be persuaded about something they do not believe in. But as people in Poland are firmly convinced that life in America is fabulous and that it is something like paradise, all attempts to persuade them that it is really so are a waste of money" (*Po Prostu, June 23, 1957*).

(b) Under the title: "A Butcher from the Bronx and a Dream," a Polish reviewer writes about *Marty*, "the first American film shown in Poland for years":

"The Warsaw public had been looking forward to it for a long time. In its eyes America is the ultimate and infallible embodiment of a certain psychological state described by Jean Giraudoux as a 'transitional state between the dream and the numbness of the body.'... In American films everything is brilliant and luxurious, the hero is the happy owner of a fortune plus a beautiful girl, and for two hours the audience can drive in a wonderful car with him, swim in a pool under palm trees, and casually sign cheques for enormous sums of money. But what a disappointment! The spectator has been shown a film in which ordinary people, living in ugly and oppressive New York flats, dream about an insignificant amount of money which would make it possible for them to open a butcher's shop in the Bronx.... Poor Polish public!"

*

ANTHONY RHODES, *who was in Budapest during the Revolution, has recently revisited Hungary. He has given us his impressions:*

The towns and villages I had passed through nine months before—Magyarovar, Györ, Komarom, where insurgents with tommy-guns and Russian tanks alternated at every road-junction—now presented a scene of almost bourgeois tranquillity. People sat in the parks reading, housewives were filling their shopping-bags, children played on swings. The wheels are turning in Hungary, the factory chimneys smoking, the shops are filled with food and clothing in quantities unknown before. That beneath this economic recovery a political terror worse than anything in Rakosi's time is going on, and that the economic recovery is not due to the Kadar régime, was to become apparent later.

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In Budapest, the restoration of last autumn's damage is certainly impressive. Workmen were putting the finishing touches to the stucco on the rebuilt façades in the 8th District, the evening I arrived; they had been working feverishly like this for months, overtime. The Kilian barracks, where Maleter held out against scores of Russian tanks for three days last October, and which had great jagged twenty-foot holes all over them, have been almost entirely rebuilt and are about to be converted into one- and two-room flats (surely the most ingenious way of secularising a potential shrine). I went into this historic building, with its façade as long as Buckingham Palace's, and spoke to one of the workmen, a plasterer. He told me they were highly paid for this work and that, although he had sympathised with Pal Maleter last November, he had to work to live. It is interesting, as a psychological light on the régime's methods, that the war damage of 1945 has been left almost untouched—for the "Fascists" did it. But this vaster damage, of 1956, has been repaired—for the people of Budapest did it. And visitors—particularly Indians, Burmese, and other "uncommitted" nationalities —must see only "Fascist" damage.

An economic recovery staggering even to the Communists themselves has taken place in Hungary since November, and the régime is now prepared to have visitors—provided they do not stray too far off the beaten track. Tours for the eastern "popular democracies" have been arranged, and Czech, Bulgarian, and Russian tourists are to be seen in the city. But unfortunately for the régime, it cannot claim credit for this economic recovery. It is due to the industry of the Hungarian people and the virtually capitalist remedies which were employed. In the most critical days after November the Communists, in desperation, shelved the Marxist-Leninist economics which had brought the richest agricultural country in eastern Europe to the point of starvation. Instead, they allowed the National Bank and one or two practical economists a free hand. These men applied what are really capitalist remedies—tight money, no public investments, loans of any kind they could lay their hands on. These included a vast Russian loan, a third of it in convertible Western currency, enabling Hungary to obtain the raw materials to start her factories again. They also jettisoned another tenet of Communist faith, the "compulsory deliveries" by the peasants. If, during these months, Communism with its trials and summary executions has been very much alive, economically it has been in a coma.

Hand in hand with this economic recovery goes political repression. Every day, as the régime's confidence increases, it becomes more hysterical in its denunciations of the patriots of last October who now fill the gaols. And here too the régime has its way of dealing with inquisitive visitors who ask to go to the trials. They are taken to "show" trials, in which at least one of the accused "counter-revolutionaries" is a civil criminal, frequently convicted in the past, and who became involved in the revolution when the prisons were opened last October. "You see," the régime says grandly, "your so-called patriots are nothing but thugs—criminals who took advantage of the situation to rob and murder."

Such a man, they claim was Gyöngyösi, at whose appeal trial I was present. It was given great publicity because it was unsavoury. A hospital nurse (Ilona Toth) who injects one of her patients with petrol (even if he is an AVH man), and later helps kill him with a pen-knife in a lavatory, will—the régime calculates—shock many worthy citizens. With her and Gyöngyösi were nine other defendants, including the writers Gali and Obersovszky. But whatever the details of the charges, to listen to these brave people, four of whom were under sentence of death, was an inspiring experience. One of the four, Ferenc Gönszi, argued boldly with the judge that the uprising was a revolution and not a "counter-revolution," that it was made by the Hungarian people and not by "foreign imperialists." He spoke with the conviction of a man who knows he is going to die, and who has therefore no thought of placating his accusers. He said quite simply that he had taken part in the revolution because, although he had originally been a Communist, he had since become disillusioned with Communism.

A further sinister feature of this trial was that it took place in a prison—the security police prison, where Pal Maleter and the writers, Tibor Dery and Gyula Hay, are said to be under arrest. After leaving this "court of justice," I took a photograph of the building but the film was confiscated by some soldiers who unfortunately saw me. I argued that I was only taking a picture of the "Law Courts," but they reported me to the Ministry of the Interior.

These then are the "show" trials of the Kadar régime, for foreign and public consumption, attended by scores of reporters, with cinema cameras and other forms of modern publicity. The visitor is not told that there are, for every one of these "show" trials, thirty held in secret: Summary Courts in which there is only one possible sentence, death, which must be executed within two hours of being passed. The only way of finding out about these secret trials is from people who have friends or relations connected with them. But to speak to people in Budapest today is not easy. On the streets at night, or in the dingy bars, a Hungarian may be prepared

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to talk, but not for long; and he will try to avoid politics. If pressed, he will say that he "gave up politics" last January. This appears to be roughly the date when the Hungarian people finally abandoned all hope of help from the West.

Incidentally, the phrase "Hungarian Revolution" is officially banned, and if people use it on the streets they are careful not to be overheard. To annoy an official, the Westerner can use it and watch his face as he replies mechanically, each time, "*counter*-revolution." All this official jargon, the polysyllabic words of Marx and Lenin—"counter-revolution," "rightist deviationism," "leftist deviationism," "rehabilitation," the euphemistic "error" for every ministerial blunder from destroying a country's economy to imprisoning 5,000 people without trial—this language only makes the average Hungarian smile. Officials, of course, are most careful to use it to the Westerner. And when I asked at the Foreign Office if I might visit the steel city of Dunapentele, fifty miles south of the capital, they replied, "Yes, you may visit Stalinvaros." (Dunapentele has just been re-christened "Stalin's City"). I continued calling it Dunapentele, and they continued calling it Stalinvaros for nearly half an hour.

If the Foreign Office is anxious to let a few Western journalists into Hungary, to give an air of respectability to the régime, the Ministry of the Interior is concerned only with "vigilance against the enemies of the people." The degree of this "vigilance" is displayed by squads of soldiers with tommy-guns at all the entrances to the Ministry of the Interior, as well as on its roof.

The ruler of this Ministry, the head of the Secret Police, is Bela Bisku, a personal friend of Kadar. He is a newcomer to the Budapest scene and, until his giddy rise a few weeks ago, was a humble Communist Party secretary in the provinces. I had an opportunity of studying his face for two hours from close up at a Party meeting in the Nepstadion. If looks mean anything, he should go far in his present work.

I also saw Kadar at this meeting and was able to compare his face with my fleeting memory of it in the Parliament building last November; the small, unwinking, blood-shot eyes, not unfeeling, but blank, uninspired; the face of a poor man brutalised a little in the struggle of life. For two hours he repeated the usual platitudes about "Fascist reactionaries"; but it is only fair to add that he gives the impression of sincerity. On the platform beside Kadar sat the other members of his government, including the two men who are said to be leading the Stalinist revival, Antal Aprö, the finance "expert," and Karoly Kiss, the secretary of the Central Committee. Aprö looks like a minor University don who teaches thermo-dynamics —the featureless face of a technician. But Karoly Kiss, with his black, thoughtful eyes behind large lenses like blocks of quartz, is sinister, a real Brides-in-the-Bath murderer. Of the others, there was György Marosan, the only man in the government conscious of possessing "charm," always smiling. He is almost good-looking, and is said to be a lady-killer. He is often spoken of as Kadar's successor, and he has the vague title of Minister of State. He used to be in charge of everything connected with "Culture," the theatre, opera, libraries, the press, Universities, etc. This greatly annoyed the people of Budapest, as he is, by profession, a baker. During the bread shortage last December, many witticisms were made about his misplaced vocation.

How do the Russians exercise control over these men? What is the chain of command from Moscow? The general theory in Budapest is that Gromov, the new Russian ambassador who arrived last March, is the real ruler of Hungary. He is highly placed in the party hierarchy, and is not, as many ambassadors are, simply an ordinary career diplomat. I met him at a reception and was struck by the blunt cordiality combined with inscrutability of this tall, bear-like man. He spoke in a barely audible voice, and behind his glazed stare and thick lips I had no idea what was going on. Through his interpreter we talked about the famous Mindszenty speech of 3rd November, which was responsible in part (the Russians allege) for their intervention. It was only after five minutes' discussion that I realised we were talking about two different versions of the speech. Mindszenty's speech, far from demanding a return of church and landowners' property, was most moderate. In Gromov's version, Mindszenty might have been Louis XVIII returning to Versailles.

But whatever the means of control, it is exercised quietly, if firmly, and Kadar and his men give the impression of being autonomous. Nor does one see Russian soldiers on the streets of Budapest. The only Russian officer I saw was sidling almost shamefacedly out of my hotel one evening; and I later saw a group of three Russian soldiers in their walking-out clothes at the Trade Fair, admiring tractors. The Russian army has behaved well since last November, when it slaughtered 15,000 Hungarians in a fortnight. They have been given the strictest orders and are generally confined to barracks, of which there are four or five well outside the city. Perhaps the most sad (and cynical) remark I heard was by a Hungarian. "The only foreigners who fought for us last November were some Russian soldiers."

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Geoffrey Gorer

Dionysus and the Welfare State

NIETZSCHE, and after him Spengler and many others, contrasted two polarities of one dimension of human behaviour: the Apollonian and the Dionysian. These could be discerned in the characters of individuals, in works of art, or in societies as a whole. In art, the contrast is much the same as that between "classical" and "romantic": in the classical, as in the Apollonian, reason is in paramount control and the values are order and proportion; in the romantic, as in the Dionysian, control is subordinated to intensity of emotion, and the values are sensation and self-abandonment. Nietzsche was the first to show that this polarity was relevant to much more than the classification or evaluation of works of art; Spengler, and Ruth Benedict in *Patterns of Culture*, used it to characterise whole societies.

Some confusion has arisen through treating these terms as mutually exclusive, rather than as the end points of a continuum. Just as there are relatively few artists or works of art who can be unequivocally classified as wholly classical or wholly romantic, so there are few personalities or societies who can be classified as completely Apollonian or completely Dionysian. In the great majority of human beings, and in the great majority of human societies, both components are present in different proportions, either overtly or potentially. People and societies will differ whether they prefer the head or the heart, self-control or letting oneself go, order or thrills. But it is a mistake to imagine that because one of the components is emphasised or valued, the other is non-existent or can be disregarded.

By their very nature, complex industrial societies must emphasise and stress the Apollonian characteristics of their populations. Urban civilisation and machino-facture depend increasingly on the population exercising self-control, both physical and mental; the replacement of animal strength by industrial power has meant that there are increasingly fewer occasions when workers in any industry can go "all out" physically. A few of the extractive industries which have not been, or have only partially been, modernised —as, for example, coal mining or agriculture —give regular opportunity for intense muscular effort. The vast majority of contemporary employments, if they demand physical effort at all, demand it minutely controlled and calculated. In the factory or workshop, on the roads, even in most homes with their delicate gadgets, constant watchfulness is necessary.

CONTEMPORARY psychology has paid practically no attention to the emotional effects resulting from the full use or restraint of the striped muscles. In nearly every complex society the leisured classes have employed much of their leisure and money in devices which would allow them to employ their larger muscles in ways which did not derogate from their social status: field sports, hunting, polo, winter sports, various organised games, and so on. All these exercises were and are considered to be self-rewarding, partly

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from the pleasure in using skill, partly from the "pleasant feeling of tiredness" which follows on these voluntary exertions. It seems probable that most people whose working lives have not been too strenuous have at some time enjoyed and even sought this pleasant feeling. Although it would be generally agreed that these feelings are pleasurable, it appears to be extraordinarily difficult for psychologists to place this pleasure within any contemporary schema of psychology or of human motivation. One of the basic hypotheses of nearly all experimental psychologies is that fatigue is un-pleasure which is measured against the pleasure of the subsequent reward (food, or the like). This is certainly a working hypothesis for experimenting with animals. Psycho-analysis has concentrated almost exclusively on the mucosi as a source of pleasure (a little recent work attempts to include the whole of the skin surface) and has practically nothing to say on the use of the striped muscles; and so perforce this discussion of rock 'n' roll will have to stand with very little academic or experimental support.

I should like to suggest that *as a dance-form* and as a social phenomenon rock 'n' roll is something quite new in this country, though it has or has had a number of analogues elsewhere. As *dance music* it seems to me (I write as a musical ignoramus) to be remarkable only for its resolute rejection of the rhythmic complications and subtleties of jazz and ragtime; one has to go back to the galop to find an equally insistent beat. The antics of the orchestral performers—playing the piano standing up, the double bass lying down, and similar contortions—although far from spontaneous, carry on the Dionysiac motive which I think I discern in the dance-form.

THE peculiarity of rock 'n' roll as a dance-form is the extent to which it employs large and energetic movements of the arms and legs, movements from the shoulder and hip with relatively little use of the knees or elbows. On the whole, arm movements have been used very little in ballroom dancing (at least since the galop); and, when the feet have been raised off the ground more than in an ordinary walking step, as in the charleston or polka, the movement has been from the knee rather than from the hip. Rock 'n' roll is the most strenuous form of dance which has been seen in public in England for a very long time.

Sociologically, rock 'n' roll is peculiar in the way it has entered our society. Nearly all the ballroom dances which have been successfully introduced during this century have originated in other countries—France, the United States, Latin America—and have been first presented here in a West End stage production, a number in a musical comedy or revue, sometimes performed by members of the cast, sometimes by professional ballroom dancers of whom Irene and Vernon Castle are the prototypes. The more expensive dance teachers with the distinguished clientèle then adapted and codified the new dance which was first performed at fashionable private dances and hotels, and then permeated downwards as far as the palais de danse. This seems to have been the typical pattern from the bunny hug and the tango to the rumba and the samba. Rock 'n' roll, on the other hand, seems to have arrived from the United States first in the form of fairly cheap dance records and perhaps stories in popular papers and magazines, and then spectacularly in a film which the middle-class critics considered almost beneath contempt. In Britain rock 'n' roll seems to have come in from the "teddy boy" section of the working class, and to have permeated upwards, against quite a lot of official or semi-official opposition and criticism.

When the demand had made itself articulate, it was quickly exploited by the purveyors of entertainment to the prosperous working classes; but from all the evidence available to me it appears that the demand existed for this type of dancing before the opportunity for performing it was supplied, rather than the other way round. As Richard Hoggart has pointed out in *The Uses of Literacy*, the assiduous exploitation of the working classes by the purveyors of nationwide entertainment

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is one of the most marked features of contemporary English society, and makes a very great contrast with the situation twenty-five years ago, when the sub-culture of the working class was an almost closed enclave in English society, about which the middle classes knew extremely little. I think, however, that Mr. Hoggart has exaggerated the passivity of the working classes in their acceptance of the entertainments provided for them; with rock 'n' roll the demand seems to have preceded the supply; the working classes seem to have found it particularly congenial, and insisted on its being made available.

A generation ago, the middle classes did not know how the equivalent of the teddy boys danced, or, by and large, whether they danced at all. To the extent that working-class dancing was considered, it was probably thought to be represented by the "Lambeth Walk." But this was in point of fact a typical West End theatre introduction, and seems to have borne about the same relationship to actual cockney dancing as the ballroom charleston did to actual American Negro dancing. I cannot claim to know very much about purely working-class dances myself, but it seems as though most of them were highly energetic performances with no, or at most intermittent, physical contact with the partner; for Londoners "Knees up, Mother Brown" appears to have been typical.

In urban societies this very strenuous type of dancing with large limb movements and very little physical contact with the partner seems to have occurred fairly frequently in the lower working classes: witness the "apache" type of dancing of French *bals musettes*, which has frequently been elaborated into a music hall turn, or the skilled and strenuous dances of the American Negro, such as the Lindy Hop, which only travel down from Harlem in extremely modified and genteel travesties.

IF ONLY the movements are considered, and not the social organisation of the dance into independent couples of male and female, this type of dancing is nearly worldwide; in a great number of the simpler and primitive societies in every continent such dances occur, nearly always linked with religion (or, in areas which have been converted to a higher religion, as a syncretist or "survival" element); and almost uniformly they are employed for inducing some type of trance. This trance may be interpreted as possession by the deity being invoked, or as releasing prophetic or supernatural powers (the witch-finding dances of West Africa, the famous *kris* dances of Bali, the Mænads and Corybantes of classical Greece) or as a technique of release from the tensions and preoccupations of everyday life. It is, in short, a Dionysiac type of dancing, both, it would seem, literally as part of the ritual accompanying the worship of Dionysus, as far as this can be reconstructed, and in the figurative meaning of the term discussed earlier. It would seem that there is a human biological potentiality for inducing ecstasy or trance by violent rhythmic movements, since the technique has been observed in so many discrete societies; whether this potentiality will be exploited or ignored would seem to depend on as yet insufficiently identified stresses and demands within the society.

WE KNOW extremely little about self-induced trance, and indeed not very much about trance in general (the theory supporting the medical use of hypnotism is decidedly inadequate) since it has been one of the human potentialities which modern complex societies have almost completely ignored. In so far as trance has been used, it has chiefly been in disapproved-of religious cult groups: spiritualist mediums, and little-known revivalist and pentecostal Protestant sects; the Holy Rollers induce possession by the type of dancing we have been discussing. I have not been able to discover anything sufficiently concrete about the "dancing mania" of the late Middle Ages; but as far as recent centuries are concerned, it would seem that rock 'n' roll is the first occasion where the type of dancing which has been used in other societies to induce trance or ecstasy has been openly performed with the knowledge, if not the consent, of the governing classes.

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I am not, of course, suggesting that the majority of rock 'n' rollers put themselves into trance, or are even conscious of the possibility of doing so; I have occasionally seen dancers with the slightly glazed and unfocused eyes which, in a non-European setting, I should have considered indicative of a light trance; and the antics of many of the orchestra players do mimic "possession."

There are, however, many "cultic" elements in the present rock 'n' roll craze, including an esoteric vocabulary not meant to be understandable by the profane ("squares"), quasi-compulsive dancing whenever the appropriate music is heard, however inappropriate the place (strictly analogous to the *m'deup* dancers of Senegal who have to be forcibly carried out of ear-shot of the drums of their special cult) and ecstatically appreciated leaders—singers or orchestral conductors. Despite the pelvic contortions of a few singers, and the double meanings in the words of some lyrics, I should consider rock 'n' roll the least sexual type of social dancing which Europe has seen in the last couple of centuries; instead of a stylisation of courtship and wooing, there is practically no physical contact nor opportunity for conversation; the dance can only be performed if the pair are in good rapport before they step on to the dance floor.

It is, of course, possible that rock 'n' roll will be a purely ephemeral craze, that its implications will never be developed. But it is also possible that it represents, on an almost entirely unconscious level, a marked reaction to the moderation, the restraint, the security of the contemporary welfare states; hope and fear, triumph and disaster, strenuous physical effort and orgiastic physical release have been almost completely banished by the developments of technology and the enormous elaboration of protective legislation which precludes debauchery as well as distress. It seems at least theoretically possible that the English urban working classes unconsciously, or at least inarticulately, feel that the secure and ordered life provided for them by the combination of modern technology and middle-class benevolence (of all political parties) does not provide all the gratifications they crave. Until the last hundred years life in the big English cities was notably violent in its amusements, its uproarious drunkenness, and its crimes, as well as in the precariousness of everyday working life. Relaxation was Dionysiac. It may be that for much of humanity security, control, and self-control are not supreme values; it is suggestive that in Soviet Russia the one really secure group, the children of the higher functionaries, the *stilyagi*, are the enthusiasts for dances of the rock 'n' roll type; although they are at the opposite end of the social scale they receive much the same disapproval as our teddy boys.

MODERN technology, humanism, and humanitarianism all tend towards a fairly undifferentiated "classless" middle-class welfare state under the ægis of rational planning, and it seemed as though Apollo had completely conquered; but perhaps for the younger workers, who have never known personal insecurity, Dionysus is returning in his most traditional guise, the violent dance which leads to trance and ecstasy.

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Vincent Buckley

Notes on Religious Poetry

IS a religious poetry possible any more? It might well be urged that the proper way of putting the question is: Can poetry help being religious? And in a sense I concur. It could be said that most poetry (or perhaps all) is religious in its manner of contact with reality, in its final orientation, if not in its intention and open meaning. But that is not the present point. We are faced with a situation in which the term has been given a limited though vague meaning, and has come generally to be disregarded by those who seem to care most for poetry. "Religious poetry" has come to be accepted (if at all) as a minor, even minimal, branch of the literature of private sentimentality—an aborted interpretation for which believers and non-believers must be held equally responsible. It is therefore necessary to see how the two words, "religious" and "poetry," which should be complementary, and yet to many people are sworn enemies, can be rescued from their joint predicament. For the very curious separation of the two, of the noun from its finest adjectival support, creates a predicament for poetry as much as for religion.

The question is a complex one; it is baffled by conflicting sophistries and preconceptions. A recent reviewer in a Catholic paper, discussing an anthology of verse, protests that "there is no purely religious poetry represented." This remark, if it does not give the game away, reminds us very forcibly that the game was given away a good many years ago. No one doubts that there may be a poetry whose sole apparent impulse is the direct cleaving to God in private devotion, or which arises from meditation on the pious mysteries; for it is these two classes of verse that the reviewer is prepared to champion. But such an impulse cannot provide a significant part of the poetry of an age like our own; nor can it be the chief support of the poetry of an age; and it is in any case something less than a religious poetry; if it is too much relied on, it weakens the practice of poetry and demeans religion into the sorry bargain.

What the plainant is obviously seeking is something which is normally expressed in the somewhat anomalous term "devotional verse." Yet a poet, especially a religious poet, cannot be a mere purveyor of easy truths or devout sentiments. Anyone who demands that he be so (as the reviewer demands it) is assisting at the final divorce of religion and life, pronouncing the decree absolute.

There is, of course, some reason in the demand for a poetry whose central impulse is religious; it is the word "purely" which is offensively quixotic. How many lances will be snapped in half against the windmill of the world if we ride that horse of "purely"! It is silly to confuse religious poetry, as a good many generations have succeeded in confusing it, with devotional poetry.

Anthologists are still capable of adding to this confusion. There is, for example, that ineptly named volume, *The Oxford Book of*

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English Mystical Verse, which is actually full of devotional effusions, and is not in any real sense mystical at all. There is, too, the more sophisticated Pelican volume, *An Anthology of Religious Verse*. The title-page proclaims that it is "designed for the times"; but no one will be surprised if our age declines to acknowledge indebtedness for most of its contents. Hilaire Belloc is certainly in keeping with its general tenor when he sings:

> *Jesus Christ, Thou child so wise,*
> *Bless mine hands and fill mine eyes,*
> *And bring my soul to Paradise.*

One cannot doubt the sincerity either of the editor or of his contributors; but one can doubt their sense of what religious spirit is relevant to the spirit of our times. Many of these are poems of "fancy" (in Coleridge's sense), or of a slack devotion, without any marshalling of the whole affective personality behind them. Not even the sophisticated use of a fashionable diction or of an appearance of complexity can disguise the fact that they are, in fact, a "*poésie dégagée.*"

D. H. Lawrence is by no means a great poet; and he is in no open sense a Christian. Yet his desperate religious sensibility rings far truer than that of most of his colleagues in this volume. It rings truer because the whole man is engaged, no matter how dimly bounded the area of his engagement:

> *And if, in the changing phases of man's life,*
> *I fall in sickness and in misery,*
> *my wrists seem broken and my heart seems dead*
> *and strength is gone, and my life*
> *is only the leavings of a life. . . .*

If we leave aside verse with a directly liturgical purpose, there are, in fact, three types of poetry—or it might be better to call them three stages—which can loosely be called religious. They are often confused with one another because we have no adequate names by which to distinguish them. The first is a poetry of simple personal devotion or of private devotional difficulties; the second is the poetry of men who are not believers in any "orthodox" creed, but who feel that the world and whatever lies behind it demand of them a reverence and an affirmation of spiritual existence; the third is a poetry of believers, whose view of life is informed at every point by a definite Creed, proclaims in its very complexity the "Credo," but is not limited by its proclamation. We might call the first devotional poetry, the second a poetry of reverence, and the third religious poetry proper. We have a horde of versifiers to give examples of the first; such poets as Kathleen Raine and D. H. Lawrence might be considered to exemplify the second; and the third seems to be seldom movingly presented in our day.

They are stages as well as types. The first two cannot be seen by a thinking Christian as aberrations from the third, but as preparations for it. Yet modern usage, almost despite itself, recognises the difficulty in accepting either of them as religious in the full sense. On the one hand, Miss Raine or Lawrence might feel slighted by the title of "religious poet," if it were bestowed without an explanatory context. On the other hand, to call a man "X—, the Catholic poet" is to show that one thinks his range limited; while to call his colleague "Y—, the Protestant poet" seems, for some reason, to proclaim him hardly a poet at all. Yet one might say "X—, the American poet, who is a Catholic," or "Y—, the German poet and well-known Lutheran," without giving offence of any kind. The reason is that men will not readily accept a poetry which is "purely religious," which seems to represent only the devotional life of one church; they demand a poetry which, in whatever terms it does so, represents *them*.

Yet if the religious impulse is to be restored to poetry in its fullness, the poetry of the third stage must be made central, and the other two seen as marginal and contributory. For each of these two is truncated. The first tends to be over-simplified in attitude and thin in sensibility, the second to lack the pressure of a consistent insight. So I shall speak henceforth of the third.

It cannot be "purely religious," and yet it

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must be centred on the desire to worship. After all, the act of adoration of a personal God is the highest act of which the human being is capable. And it is, moreover, eminently suited to poetry. It is an act, not only of the mind and will, but of the whole person. It is an act around which the other responses of the person—responses to friends, to human joy and suffering, to the life of nature—tend spontaneously to group themselves, and from which they derive certain of their strength. Most important, it is an act for which words are appropriate—in particular, words based on that kind of metaphorical use which comes from analogical thinking: in other terms, the most concentrated language of poetry.

These things, which are reasons for the suitability to poetic expression of the highest human act, are also reasons why that act is seldom found in a "pure" manner in the finest poetry. For the poet who desires to go to God in his poetry can go only as a complete person, with all his faculties. To attempt to go as a discarnate spirit mouthing words (the very description of the attempt reveals its absurdity!) is to destroy one's attempt at its beginning. One can go to God only as a person; and he who does so takes with him not only himself, but all the powers and contours of his individual world—that is, of the whole world as he sees and experiences it. Religious poetry is first of all a kind of offertory. And what it most offers is the poet's understanding of the actual human situation; nothing less will do.

It is true that poetry in itself may be a form of piety—that is, of *pietas* in its Roman, or more than Roman conception: piety towards the land in which one's images grow and flourish, towards one's ancestors, towards the ordinary toils and the extraordinary sorrows of one's brothers, towards the sheer joy of living, towards man's manifold acceptance of his destiny, even towards the few feet of grave in which one is to await the resurrection. All of these are things one may know in the life around one, all of them are wetted by the fingers of God. It may be that all poetry is, or springs from, or becomes, a piety in this sense. The greater part of poetry is concerned with natural mysteries, including those of human feeling and emotion; religious poetry cannot ignore these mysteries, but must illuminate them with whatever supernatural light it has—and that may not be much. It can point, however waveringly, to the supernatural values which at every point wait to inform them, and into whose radiance they extend, as into a fourth dimension. It is one of the tasks of religious poetry to incarnate in words what is prefigured in the actual condition of man and nature, to create a fourth dimension in which everything, "the full height and depth and breadth," may take its place: even "my sister death," which after all is as much a creature as we are ourselves.

Poetry is a reflectiveness, a means of confronting mystery. It is, then, a piety—but it cannot be actuated by what is normally called "piety." Not only is that inadequate as an inspiration, it is also distorting as an attitude. It leaves out too much; it distorts or crumbles away whatever remains; and what it leaves out is the very sinews of poetic knowledge. Good poets do not rely on it; neither St. John of the Cross nor Hopkins is a *bien-pensant.*

There is another, more sophistical attitude which is also disturbing. It is the view that, while religious poetry is not to be equated with devotional poetry, it can be tense and mature only while it records the struggle of an individual soul against temptation of one kind or another. Judged on this basis, ambivalence would be one of the marks of a truly religious poetry. And it often is so; but not necessarily, not even centrally. The truth is that religious poetry is first of all an outcome of the impulse to worship, however complex the expression of that impulse. It is not an outcome of the subjective need to complain, analyse, or confess. Donne has been a dangerous model here; and so has the emphasis placed by critics on the "terrible sonnets" of Hopkins. Such poetry usually comes from a division in the poet; since it comes from the need to remove the act of worship from all other human acts, it tends

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invisibly to become a poetry of the personal problem, an examination rather than an expression of the worshipper's own sensibility.

It has its place and proper magnificence; yet its place is not the central one.

II

"RELIGIO" denotes a bond, a link, a covenant, between God and the human person—a covenant which has already been made with mankind in mystical fact, and which the individual, by his free assent, is able to ratify or reject. Poetry can come either from ratification or rejection. If it comes from ratification, it should be in some way true to the nature of the bond. That bond is more than a vertical one, existing between God and the individual, and capable only of being subverted or broken by the recognition of other bonds. Man is bound by a pattern of bonds or covenants, and not only by one. There is a bond with all his fellow-men, both living and dead; there is a bond with social institutions; and there is a bond with nature. All of these gain meaning and coherence with reference to the vertical relationship which is the central religious fact. Indeed, in Christianity, they are its expressions; in the whole pattern man is free to be himself.

Christianity adds a new power and dimension to this pattern which already exists. Christianity is not a natural religion dressed in priestly vestments; it is, on the contrary, supernatural and redemptive, strengthening and elevating whatever exists in nature. Because it is, both initially and for ever, incarnational, because it is a religion which insists on the transfiguration of the natural, it brings the divine terrifyingly close to the human gaze.

The word "Christianity" has slipped into these notes. The reason is not only that I am a Christian, but that I cannot see whence a restoration of religious poetry is to come in this country if it does not come from Christianity. Some religious conceptions, certainly some religious systems, are on the whole not conducive to poetry; they are not inclined that way. The shaky body of concealed dogma which we may call positivism (I am not referring to any particular philosophical method) tends to subvert poetry because it subverts language as a vehicle of knowledge. Poets who write great poetry in a positivist age do so by reaction. Yeats is an outstanding example. But if positivism tends to limit poetry, so may those other and nobler systems — more properly called religious — systems of a gnostic or other-worldly kind where a highly charged sensibility is suspect because it is regarded as a path to heresy. It is not that Hinduism, for example (and I know very little of it), is not capable of poetic expression; it obviously is. But it does not of itself, as a vision of life, as the formative influence on a sensibility, so forcefully demand expression in poetry. Christianity, on the other hand, does—and Catholicism in particular. It would be culturally lost without such an expression. And it requires a humanist poetry, a poetry based on the human image.

Since the natural and the supernatural have been so wedded, everything is capable of taking on, in Christian eyes, a sharpness of definition, a strength of contour, which is explicable only in terms of its being an analogue of God's life in the world. The very possibility of an orthodox religious poetry depends not only on the inner conviction but also on the inner unity of the poet. It depends on the extent to which his sense-life is in accord with his emotions, and to which both are expressive of his intellectual attitudes—the extent, that is, to which Christianity is his imaginative climate.

The principal mark of such a poetry will often be a fierce realism, a realism superior in certain important respects to other literary modes which claim a similar title. It must take its form, of course, from the talent and temperament of the individual poet; very different manners and emphases arise: a Hopkins to be set beside a Dunbar, the occasional forcefulness of Villon complementing the more constant strength of Chaucer. One cannot prescribe a manner, one can only point to a general quality which, if it is given a chance, can find its own embodiment. But

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realism is the important word: realism to the sense-facts, realism to the pressures of one's own language, realism to the Christian vision of the world.

IT IS a realism based on a habit of thought which it would probably be accurate to call analogical. The American poet, Allen Tate, has a most illuminating comment to make on this very quality. (I can do no better than to quote the example which he quotes). In his book, *The Forlorn Demon*, he speaks of an incident in the life of St. Catherine of Siena, and then continues:

> *St. Catherine does not report it (the Blood of Christ); she re-creates it, so that its analogical meaning is confirmed again in blood that she has seen. . . .*

And he quotes the Saint's own words:

> *"Then [the condemned man] came, like a gentle lamb; and seeing me he began to smile, and wanted me to make the sign of the Cross. When he had received the sign, I said, 'Down! To the bridal, my sweetest brother. For soon Thou shalt be in the enduring life.' He prostrated himself with great gentleness, and I stretched out his neck; and bowed me down, and recalled to him the Blood of the Lamb. His lips said naught save Jesus! and Catherine! And so saying, I received his head in my hands, closing my eyes in the divine goodness and saying, 'I will.'*
>
> *"When he was at rest my soul rested in peace and quiet, and in so great fragrance of blood that I could not bear to remove the blood on me from him."*

Tate goes on to add his own comment:

> *It is deeply shocking, as all proximate incarnations of the Word are shocking, whether in Christ and the Saints, or in Dostoyevsky, James Joyce, or Henry James.*

"It is deeply shocking"; it is. It is deeply illuminating, too, with a kind of directness of knowledge which normally poetry alone is capable of mediating. We have just assisted at the execution of a repentant criminal; and we have, in the same act and in the same words, assisted at the crucifixion of Christ. For St. Catherine, the two orders of reality are literally fused in the one event; she sees them fusing; and she enables us to share her perception as poetry does, not physically but imaginatively. The criminal is like a gentle lamb; Christ is the Lamb. The one has to shed his blood, the other His Blood, which somehow comes to give its mystical reality to the blood of the criminal. St. Catherine mediates between Christ and criminal. It is remarkable how serenely, how firmly, she acts to reconcile them in fact; and it is remarkable how serenely she reconciles them in our imagination. It is she who says "I will," consenting not only to the death of the criminal, not only to the death of Christ, but to her own death; and seeing all three not as pitiable but as redemptive. For her, in that moment, the gushing blood has literally the fragrance of the Blood of Christ. One order declares, enacts the reality of the other. She is enacting in her own imagination, even in her senses, her analogical awareness. And the more real the blood, the more strongly the analogue is established. Simply as a piece of writing, this is immensely active and positive. Here is doctrine as direct vision, rather than intellectual formulation.

Such a realism, based as it is on an extraordinary interior act of the person, may be a prerogative of the saints. But it is possible also to poets, in kind if not in degree. It provides a norm towards which religious poetry aspires. It is a realism in which two orders of being merge in a single verbal or dramatic act. It is a use of words to enact what they signify; and it therefore has something sacramental about it.

It is not, at least in kind, confined to religious poetry. Shakespeare has it, and Donne, and Marvell, and Yeats. Blake has it, even in his non-religious lyrics:

> *How the Chimney-sweeper's cry*
> *Every black'ning Church appalls;*
> *And the hapless Soldier's sigh*
> *Runs in blood down Palace walls.*

But in his case it takes the form of an enormous compression of the usual use of meta-

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phor. It is a powerful mind, a mind with the habit of analogy, that can so compress the shuddering of a church which is both a building and an institution, and that can show us a sigh running down as blood.

But the kind of religious poetry of which I am speaking is able to fulfil what, in other poetry, might remain a tendency or aspiration.

There is one question which poetry is uniquely fitted, if not to answer, at least to explore. It is this: Given the existence of a supernatural world, what has it to do with the world of man and of nature; how may the superior world be apprehended through the inferior? The only way, so far as I can see, is the way of analogy.

The scholastic notion of analogy is well known. Put crudely, it is the notion that the existence and attributes of God can be known (though imperfectly) by analogy from the created world. There is a sufficient similarity of being between the two realities for one to express the qualities of the other.

I do not think that the scholastic philosophical habit is at all the same thing as the poetic habit of the Christian poet, or that it is necessary to the poet. For him, a different process is involved. He may see different parts of the created world as expressing each other; and in any case, he is not so much concerned with the *notion* of analogy as with its existence in himself, as a component of his individual vision.

If it is not a question of a philosophic system, neither is it a question of literary devices. It is, I suppose, a habit of awareness; and to speak in such terms is to speak of something which is not merely "mental," but a whole personality taking up its stance before reality visible and invisible. The result is not philosophising, nor an "orthodox" way of handling imagery, but a personal vision deriving from a communal vision, modifying and embodying it. It is the capacity for seeing with personal immediacy what we might call the analogical structure of the world.

To encourage belief in the revealed mysteries, as Christianity does, is to inculcate such an awareness. To stress the Incarnation and its effects is to inculcate such an awareness. God and his existence may be approached through created things. But He may safely be approached through created things, because the similarity between Him and His creation is not a pleasant fiction, but is rooted in reality.

The analogical vision may exist on several poetic levels. On the level of the mystical life, St. John of the Cross sings:

> *O crystal well!*
> *Oh that on Thy silvered surface*
> *Thou wouldst mirror forth at once*
> *Those eyes desired*
> *Which are outlined in my heart!*
> *Turn them away, O my Beloved!*
> *I am on the wing.*
> The Bridegroom:
> *Return, My Dove!*
> *The wounded hart*
> *Looms on the hill*
> *In the air of thy flight and is refreshed.*

This is clearly nature poetry; it is clearly, in some sense, erotic poetry. But nature does service for God, and Eros for Agape; the one order is the imaginative pledge of the other. The very idea of God as the soul's Bridegroom is the result of an analogical habit; so is the device of putting into the mouth of God imagery of the same kind as the Soul-Bride itself uses.

Dante is the supreme example of a more usual kind, a kind which, because of its breadth of reference, we call religious rather than mystical. In Hopkins's "The Windhover," the analogical vision is made even more readily accessible, because more obvious; while "The Four Quartets" reveal it, but less evenly deployed.

Yet how many poets can we point to, in whom it is regular and satisfying? Herbert cheapens it to allegory, Vaughan almost relinquishes it altogether in his insistence on attaining a kind of mystic song, and Crashawe abuses it with fluent hysteria. And the alarming thing (the thing which provides a secondary motive for the writing of these

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notes) is that most of our Christian contemporaries are incapable of reaching it at all. Robert Lowell, with his tragic vision of the Incarnation, has something of it; so has Vernon Watkins, with his gentle fusing of different orders of experience; and "Little Gidding" has passages of a moving completeness in this mode. But is there anyone else, in all our huddle of Christian poets, who does not positively undermine it?

III

THE difficulties of the truly religious poet in our age are immense. He tends to answer them either with too simple a facility, or with too distorting a tension. It is not that tension is undesirable. We have only to remember Pascal's line: "Christ is in agony to the end of the world, and who are we to sleep," to recall with stunned embarrassment our own attempts to fabricate solutions. For, while religious poetry has praise at its centre, it is a kind of praise which is rooted in the individual vision, the preoccupations and torments of the praiser. David the Psalmist did not only praise God; he worried in his poetry about his own condition and the condition of his nation. He was representative as well as unique. Such a blend is natural and often necessary; for poetry is the language of a man, not of a worshipful robot or an angel. Grace of statement, fullness of praising are therefore not enough, they do not exhaust the possibilities of religious acts in poetry. If poetry praises it is the whole poem, with all its tensions, which does so; it is not merely the statements it contains.

So while it praises it may express a very deep personal conflict. We are generally suspicious of a modern poetry which is consistently lacking in personal tension. I do not want to state any other case but my own. I do not want to fall in with those critics to whom the religious life is of necessity a matter of dehumanising, of unbearable frustrations. I want to speak of a natural and inevitable tension which the soul encounters in its very growth; it is a tension caused, at bottom, by an awareness of the disparity between what man is and what he is called to become, between the actual state of society and the divine redemptive life which tries to quicken it. We are right to expect in religious poetry the evidence of such a tension; or, rather, we are right to be suspicious when we find it absent. Hopkins bears witness to it; so does Donne; so does Allen Tate himself. One's own serenity of spirit must not be too cheaply bought; nor can we be content to ape the serenity of others. If we do, words decay, the drama of the world becomes a pathetic mime, and all the reality of poetry is lost.

It must not be bought too dearly, either. A healthy tension of struggle and growth is not neurosis. The tension in a truly religious poetry will at once represent something of the actual condition of man, suggest the reality towards which he struggles, and show the tension as resolvable. The other way lies *accidie* or despair.

The problem of a modern religious poetry is a problem of the expansion of sensibility. Most contemporary poets are conscious of living in a closed universe, a universe which offers little possibility of expansion either to the sensibility or to the imagination. The problem has been explored in two separate issues of ENCOUNTER. Stephen Spender in "Inside the Cage" sketched the developing outlines of our condition. Sir Herbert Read atomised it, dealt with what we may perhaps call its statics. From what each of them says we may see that the problem which true religion faces in our day has much in common with the problem which poetry faces. And the plight of religious poetry presents that problem in its most acute form.

Despite all recent attempts to deny it, we are still living in a world overshadowed by the failure of the Romantic dream. The world we confront is by no means the same as that which the Romantics thought themselves to have conquered and transformed. It will be necessary to list some of the reasons for this, because they testify to the difficulty of writing a religious poetry in our day.

In the first place, there has been a divorce between life and religion, and a divorce between life and poetry. Both poetry and religion perhaps preserve their autonomy

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(though Spender suggests that poetry doesn't); but at what a cost do they preserve it! In some circles it is fashionable to blame Descartes for this separation; in others, it is fashionable to blame the Atom Bomb, or the Zeitgeist, or any other product of the fancy or the undisciplined scientific will. Something, at any rate, has disastrously separated matter and spirit, man's private from his public life, "what can be done" from what can be aspired to, justice from practicability. Where poetry has accepted this dualism, it has become either rarefied or naturalistic; where it has reacted against it, it has mostly become futile or incoherent, because it has insisted on swimming with inadequate resources against an overpowering stream. As Spender puts it, there is no longer the capacity to "transform the environment."

There is no longer the will, either. When human function becomes primary, and human destiny only a pious idea, poetry comes to seem little more than an after-dinner speech delivered by an imbecile bore. The image of man reduced to a function is not the image which poetry of its nature strives to embrace and cherish. If man is "like that," then there is nothing for us to talk about, except perhaps the little beasties at the bottom of the garden. Or we may study with some complacency our own sensations or, better still, our unconscious which is so fascinating and which does us all so much good. Such a reaction is understandable, but it cannot be the staple of poetry; and religion withers in its atmosphere.

That is the second point. Religious poetry cannot help challenging, and being challenged by, the primacy of the machine. Where man is estimated by his functions alone he comes to be surrounded, with as much exclusiveness as his revolted spirit will allow, by images of his functions—by machines. It would be absurd to say that we should do away with machines. But a world dominated by machines is not the most suitable world for poetry to meet; in such a world, human living is seen as a matter of "machinery"; and there is progressively less and less for the thinker to understand, less for the poet to sympathise with and share. It is an odd situation, it is an unpoetical one, where men are persuaded to accept "machinery," whether physical or social, as the most apt mirror of their own lives. Divorced from natural processes, grown unused to thinking in terms of nature, and to reflecting on one's own destiny as it is reflected by nature, one loses the capacity for metaphor.

THE third point is this: That nature, where it is noticed at all, is noticed as a dead thing. I. A. Richards says that it is "neutralised," and seems to think it good that it should be so. But it is more than neutralised (deprived of animistic qualities), it is actually frozen. No one any longer desires to see trees walking; but to most modern poets they do not seem even to move with any conviction. In other words, nature is seldom seen as the natural habitat of man, spur to his imagination, mirror of his moral being.

Whatever change took place did so between Wordsworth and his great interpreter, Matthew Arnold. The Victorians spent a great deal of time glossing over the problem: how to reconcile in a personal vision nature and spirit. If for the "spirit" we substitute "imagination" (which both the Romantic and the Victorian traditions saw as the chief agent of the spirit), we can see how far the degeneration had gone in fifty years.

For Arnold the imagination, by means of which the Romantics had hoped to heal the breach between, and even to assert the identity between, man and nature, had itself become one of the terms of the conflict. The imagination itself (and with it the moral sense) had become cut off from nature. The great restorer had become an agent of despair. Both Wordsworth and Arnold speak of the power of nature not only to console but to illumine: but with what a difference. Even to those of us who cannot like Wordsworth it is plain that his poetry enacts the process of consolation of which he speaks; while Arnold can only talk about the consolation—or, more often, announce his need of it. There has been a drying-up of feeling, even

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a mistrust of it. Where Wordsworth can willingly accept the idea of a human being

> *Rolled round in earth's diurnal course*
> *With rocks, and stones, and trees,*

Arnold can only cry of

> *Delicate spirits, pushed away*
> *In the hot press of the noon-day.*

His creative work is an attempt to meet and to convert into terms of poetry the challenge of a natural world which has become frozen and spiritless, of a society dying for want of communal life, and of an interior life terrified by its own lack of spontaneity. In other words, it is an attempt to meet the challenge of a world deprived of imaginative possibilities; and there could be no question of the problem being overcome, as some of the Romantics thought themselves to have overcome it.

THIS situation has lately become worse. We can now see that the great experiments of Eliot and Pound pushed the problem into the background for a generation; while Yeats's answer to it was an answer for himself alone—a poetic Sinn Fein. Nature still seems frozen, man still terrified of his own possibilities.

In such a case (and this is the fourth reason for the difficulties facing a religious poetry) there is an increase in tempo in the search for "experiences," in the lax talk about "humanism." The undergraduate who announced in the Cambridge number of *Twentieth Century*, "I believe in Beethoven," may have been brash, but he was also representative. A man who can choose to speak in this way of the things which prop up his life either is boasting or has no beliefs at all.

The cult of "experience" is a debilitating one, a kind of refinement which has something gross about it. It implies the passivity of the poet, makes him a sounding-board or a musical instrument which there are no spirits, no muses (for he does not believe in either) to play. It is also damaging to the possibility of religious poetry. If we rely on "experiences" to sustain us, then it is unlikely that many of us will "experience" the supernatural order with anything like the same strength, with anything like the poetic possibilities, as we experience our immediate physical environment or the expressions on our friends' faces. The cult of experience, of passivity (and it is alarmingly widespread) is essentially naturalistic.

It may be said that the old, eternal subjects of poetry remain, the subjects of love, death, God, society, joy in nature—and that it is these subjects, not some factitious religious vision, which provide the central tradition of our poetry. It may be so; but it misses the point, just the same. These eternal subjects remain, it is true, but to what extent are they accessible to the popular imagination? The answer has a good deal to do with the extent to which they are accessible to the poet's imagination.

I once remarked to a poet (younger even than myself) who was discoursing on this very subject that I took the eternal subjects to be women, death, and God; and I added facetiously, "in that order." Unfortunately he took me seriously. He demurred, and substituted "the human soul, the finality of human experience, and sex," or words to that effect. In other words, virtually my own Triad, but less curt, more closely surrounded by jargon, and put in a different order. One cannot help wondering just how accessible these subjects are to his own imagination.

They are available, certainly; they are there to be responded to and used. But what dimensions do they bear with them? How far do they extend into the light of ordinary human living as the poet experiences it? To what extent are they mere ideas, which it needs a catastrophic experience to turn into present realities? They ought not to be so, yet for most modern poets they unquestionably are. Is it necessary to see a thousand men die before one can write with understanding of the meaning of death? It would seem so; for there is no stable attitude to life by which these available subjects can be ordered, deepened, qualified—by which they are made accessible to the imagination.

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These are the questions which I feel underlie, for example, Spender's "Inside the Cage." They are questions about the future not only of religious poetry but of all poetry. The testimony of many men is that our world makes us schizoid; most of our poetry wears on its face the furrows of emotional confusion or the dementia præcox mask. It seems to me, then, that any fine poetry written today will be in some sense religious, because it is only a religious vision which can reconcile the creative imagination to its material in the life of nature and the life of men. But if we are to have a body of poetry in which the best elements of recent experiment are made use of and transformed, I think a more definite religious conception must be at the centre of it.

Aquarium

NO WINGS, no fins,—this is our aquarium:
we hobble about on its smooth glass floor.
Each heart beats time—time like a time bomb—
ticks, ticks toward a needle, steady red
needle. The explosion comes. And we're dead.

This is not a history book about dictators and kings:
waterweeds clamber up glass, and this poem sings
of the stars that float on the surface and never sink,
as we always do, beneath its cold wet brink.

You are sleepy now. Clear glass is comfortable. This
aquarium is a sphere. That lintel, you're right, it is pain, pain.
It's shaking. Be careful. There are marshes and it's dusk.
Just past the glass does eternity really begin?
It too is a sphere, like our conception of time.
It is liquid as well. On its surface stars float like a scum.
—but the whole lot of them live in another aquarium.

When waterweeds are dead they become wooden.
In the glass a ghost can occasionally be contemplated.
If only it stopped at eternity, the heart's red needle,
dead waterweeds would clamber towards a coffin nailed with stars.

Explode. Explode. The glass will splinter like spray.
Who knows a short-cut to the Milky Way?

I certainly couldn't say.

Jerzy Pietrkiewicz, from The Magic Crystal (1942)
(translated by Burns Singer)

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Melvin J. Lasky

The "Sovietologists"

When is a Change not a Change?

IT WAS a strange monkish band of scholars who wandered in and out of the halls of the old Oxford nunnery now St. Antony's College. England broiled in the hottest June week in almost half-a-century, but the disputations went on, cool and keen, *sine ira et studio*, as if donnishness had suddenly become synonymous with devotion to the urgencies of the day. How far we have come from the old-fashioned debates on what used to be called "the Russian question," with their outraged idealist's sense of betrayal! —or even from the agitated meetings of recent years, called to sound the alarm. The problem of Bolshevism has passed out of the hands of the Left dialecticians and, to judge from Oxford, out of the framework of cold-war propaganda. It is no longer a question of either how twisted Russian socialism has become or how evil and dangerous the *Drang vom Osten* is. The scholars and scientists have taken over. There was a Harvard sociologist who had amassed vast collections of facts by means of ingenious questionnaires; there was a "Kremlinologist" whose files could correlate the public appointments of generals, agitators, functionaries, and ministers with the most secret high-policy decisions; there were historians, economists, students of philosophy, diplomacy, and æsthetics. If knowledge were power, Moscow might almost come to fear a new encirclement. Russia is no longer the old Churchillian mystery in a riddle wrapped up in an enigma. It appears well on its way to becoming a theory supported by a footnote and wrapped in a bibliography.

Still, for all the new-fangled scientific techniques and the vaunted academic objectivity, there is no fury like a scholar scorned. Even in a group like this one, where the emotional rapport of like-minded liberal anti-Communism was so great as almost to induce the impression of unanimity, the ultimately decisive factors of individual temperament and intuition intruded themselves. There is never in the Academy mere dispassion and disinterestedness, for there is always mood and instinct and those obscure compulsions which made a Rostovtzev produce three volumes on the Roman Empire when he was really concerned with the Romanovs, and drove Ferrero to do a biography of Cæsar when he was really thinking of Mussolini and Lenin. There is a very personal dialectic here—and even something soulful and "very Russian."

From the very outset there seemed to be a lurking storminess behind the façade of intellectual calm. Two Americans began the discussions with a defence of their respective papers—Bertram Wolfe's "The Durability of Despotism," and Merle Fainsod's "Changes in the Structure of Soviet Power." Everybody seemed

DURING the last week in June, an international group of authorities on Soviet affairs met in Oxford, under the joint auspices of St. Antony's College and the Congress for Cultural Freedom, to discuss "Changes in Soviet Society." (By coincidence, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party was meeting at the very same time in Moscow and discussing some "Soviet changes" of its own.) This report on the meetings held at Oxford is written by Melvin J. Lasky, who edits the Berlin monthly Der Monat, *as well as* The Anchor Review *in New York; he has recently edited the "White Book" on* The Hungarian Revolution (*Secker and Warburg, London*).

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to be in agreement. Max Beloff, who was the first "discussant" (so stands the word in the programme), found nothing to dissent from; he, like so many others who followed him (George Katkov, Philip Mosely, Frederick Barghoorn, Leo Valiani, Leonard Shapiro) paid polite tribute to the "soundness" and "substantial truth" of both approaches. Yet somewhere during the course of the morning it was discovered that the two papers were, if anything, "polar opposites." Professor Fainsod, cautious to the point of tentativeness, was almost alarmed at the suggestion of such conflicting sharpness; and Mr. Wolfe, passionate, eloquent, argumentative, vigorously denied that there was any scientific meaningfulness in having the approaches classified in terms of "pessimism" and "optimism." But pessimist he surely was, and his brilliant paper was an implicit rejection of just such elements of hopefulness which stamped his colleague's interpretation.

OF COURSE, it was really only "perspectives of development" that Mr. Fainsod had been talking about, and he knew how reversible so many of the post-Stalin changes were. Still he was impressed by the importance of the pattern of concessions and pressures: the rôle of the secret police had been reduced, the atmosphere of Byzantine fawning and servility checked, and the popular desires for a higher living standard, for greater security and freedom, recognised. In Khrushchev he seemed to sense "a desire to turn the clock back to the early thirties, an almost wistful search to recapture something of the élan of the stirring years of the First Five Year Plan before the blight of the purges blackened the face of Russia...." The changes, if not "fundamental," were at least "dramatic"—the amnesty decrees, the release of prisoners from the forced labour camps, the rehabilitation (frequently posthumous) of many "enemies of the people." This kind of controlled relaxation is both difficult and dangerous; its price may be a continuing decline in ideological militancy and messianic dedication. His own travels in the Soviet Union last year gave him some ground for believing that "fundamental criticism" is not dead. "I say we've got young people, but no youth," one Russian had sighed, "no, the young people are not what they were...." Mr. Fainsod's comment on this mood of disenchantment was:

"New generations work their own mysteries, and the hallowed orthodoxies of one sometimes emerge as the discarded follies of the next.... The step from total commitment to total rejection may be shorter than most students of totalitarianism have been prepared to concede.... I remain optimistic about the long-term future.... The new leadership has, of course, been quick to clamp down restrictions wherever elements in the population probed the limits or overstepped the bounds of 'the new freedom.' But surely it is heartening to observe that, after nearly forty years of conditioning the new 'Soviet Man,' there are still those who probe limits and dare overstep bounds. Is it asking too much to believe that the future belongs to them?... Let me make myself clear [Fainsod had said]. I see little or no possibility that the Soviet system will soon evolve in the direction of the Western democratic model. I think I see at least some possibility that an oligarchically-governed totalitarian state may be transformed over the years into a more traditional type of authoritarian régime which provides at least minimal safeguards for the rights of individuals and groups and makes some adjustment to the plural energies which run in Soviet society...."

For Mr. Wolfe, this was more than asking too much: the future, alas, did not belong to them at all. To be heartened was all-too-human, but to indulge in sentimental self-deceptions was to prepare the road to ruin:

"It seems to me that the Western World has found it hard to gaze straight and steadily at the head of Medusa, even if only in the reflecting shield of theoretical analysis. Brought up in a world of flux and openness, we find it hard to believe in the durability of despotic systems. Our hopes and longings are apt to betray us again and again into readiness to be deceived or to deceive ourselves. And the 'journalistic' nature of our culture has made us too ready to inflate the new, because that alone is 'news,' while we neglect to put it into its tiresomely 'repetitious' historical and institutional setting.

"From the NEP to 'Socialism in One Country'; from the Popular Front and Collective Security to the Grand Alliance and One World; from 'Peaceful Co-existence' to the 'Geneva Spirit'—the occupational hazard of the Western intellectual has been to read not too little but too much into planned changes, involuntary changes, and even into mere tactical manœuvres and verbal asseverations.

"Each has been hailed in turn as the softening of the war of the totalist state on its own people and its war upon the world; as the long-awaited 'inevitable change' or 'fundamental transformation,' 'the sobering that comes from the responsibilities of power'; the 'response to the pressure of the recognition of reality'; the growing modification of totalist power by 'a rationalist technocracy'; the 'sobering effect of privilege upon a new privileged class'; the 'rise of a limited and traditionalist despotism'; a 'feeling of responsibility to Russia as against World Revolution'; the 'quiet digestion period of a sated beast of prey' no longer on the prowl; the 'diffusion of authority which could lead to a constitutional despotism'; the 'mellowing process that sooner or later overtakes all militant movements'; the second thoughts on the struggle for the world which have come at last 'from a recognition of the universal and mutual destructiveness of nuclear war'; the 'preordained downward curve in the parabola of revolution'; the 'inevitable work

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of erosion upon the totalitarian edifice.' (Each of these expressions is quoted from some highly respected authority on Soviet affairs in the Anglo-Saxon world.)..."

His own considered judgment was formulated in these words:

"...Modern totalitarianism is one of those comparatively closed and conservative societies with a powerful and self-perpetuating institutional framework, calculated to assimilate the changes which it intends and those which are forced upon it, in such fashion that—barring explosion from within or battering down from without—the changes tend to be either inhibited or shaped and assimilated as within-system changes in a persistent system with built-in staying powers."

THE phrase, "within-system change," caught on like a slogan and for days practically dominated the conversations which raged in the St. Antony's "buttery," temporarily converted into a bar. Nor was it without modulations and variations. Victor Zorza of the *Manchester Guardian* discoursed sceptically on "when is a change not a change." Charles Thayer, with a professional diplomat's feeling for possible alternatives, enquired as to the potential nature of "out-of-system changes." Richard Lowenthal, dialectician that he is, suggested that quantity might become quality when the number of "within-system changes" accumulated. Was Mr. Wolfe, then, denying that anything had changed in the Soviet Union? Yes and no. Change, he seemed to be saying, was the rule in human history. Dictators die. An armistice ends the hostilities of war. Moods of men and social classes take on different hues. But according to his rules of totalitarian society, a change there is either not fundamental, or is merely transitory, or already assimilated. Thus:

Collective leadership? "The whole dynamics of dictatorship calls for a personal dictator, authoritarianism for an authority, infallible doctrine for an infallible interpreter and applier, totally militarised life for a supreme commander, and centralised, undivided, all-embracing, and 'Messianic' power for a 'charismatic' symbol and tenant of authority." His word for the Directory and the Duumvirate was "transitory," and as he spoke the latter was in point of fact liquidating the former in Moscow.

End of the Police State? "The purge today resembles those of Stalin's 'benign' periods or of Lenin's day....The techniques of the blood-purge have not been forgotten, only held in reserve in case of need...."

No More Camps? "With manpower shortages the concentration camp is the most wasteful and least productive way of using up a man. The camps are gentler now, yet the camps are there...."

Taken all in all, then, the *System* was likely to remain. Dressed out in persuasive theoretical terminology, Mr. Wolfe's argument was essentially a thing of biblical-prophetic earnestness. But his exercise in sociological abstraction struck many as a piece of dialectical ingenuity with just too many built-in staying powers of his own. (In a witty, friendly aside, Raymond Aron called him "the last great doctrinaire of Soviet society...."). If one were to stretch the definition of a System in history to the rubbery limits of Wolfe's *Ding-an-sich*, then one could almost maintain that in the Western world very few "really basic changes" had happened for centuries—in the United States since George Washington, and in England nothing truly fundamental since Oliver Cromwell. From one point of view this is good to know; it would certainly be reassuring that at least two nations were set upon an irrevocable course of free democratic evolution. But it does telescope with an astronomical calm all the so-called "within-system changes" which might include wars, depressions, crises, times of trouble and despair, and times of hope and rejoicing. Even Mr. Wolfe, as one came to know in a week of agitated give-and-take, was less the philosopher of history, writing for all time, than the Cassandra, troubled by a fear for the day after tomorrow.

IF THE MEN at the telescope turned out to be moralists, the men at the microscope were scarcely less involved, personally or politically, with the wrigglings on their slides. Max Hayward, claiming to be a mere "factologist,"* registered in precise detail the constraints imposed on contemporary Russian writers, and their restlessness under them. But there was a sympathetic and more than academic understanding on the part of this young British scholar who took pains to learn almost perfect Russian within a year and spent another two wandering around the Soviet Union ("illegally" as the authorities later insisted) making friends and talking with "near-intellectuals." He clearly felt the tragedy of caution and even cowardice, he knew the complications of wearing masks and indulging in double-think. Whereas the previous debate was among moralists, veering between hopeful optimism and prophetic pessimism, the clash here was among æstheticians, caught between a fraternal sympathy for men of thought who have almost lost heart (and almost lost their minds,

* According to Mr. Hayward, "factology" was, in the Stalin era, once actually denounced as a heresy in the field of geographical studies.

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if not their heads) in a cruelly unequal contest with commissars, and a more critical fastidiousness which refused to concede the proud Russian name of *intelligentsia* to men of such small ethical and cultural achievement. It was Professor Isaiah Berlin, who introduced the latter note into the discussion. Professor Berlin had returned to Moscow last year, and he found precious little among the Russian élite to give him encouragement. He found, at the top, a world of "rough-necks and bureaucrats," both filled with a deeply contemptuous anti-intellectualism. (Kaganovitch had asked: "Is Hegel taught in Oxford?" "No, but Kant is." "Idealist!... And who else?" "Hume." "Empirical monist!..." This is Kaganovich's last recorded philosophical conversation.) And beneath them, an effectively bullied semi-intellectual class, cut off from their roots in the past, deadened to the impulses of genuine controversy, eager not for the electrifying word but for a few paltry shared privileges. This was harshly put, but also sadly spoken, with a note of Moussorgsky mournfulness.

But George Katkov, Russian philosopher and Fellow of St. Antony's, was moved only to anger. "I have been provoked by Professor Berlin," he began, and the provocation was scarcely a figure of speech. He seemed to be quivering with emotion, his hands waving in helpless, eloquent gestures, as he tried to find a way of giving vent to his outrage and indignation. Carried away as we all were by the personal drama of the moment, I detect in my conference notes only a reference to an "unexpected burst of applause." I suspect that to a certain extent Katkov, himself a product of the Russian intelligentsia (albeit in the cosmopolitan days of long ago), was defending, in a fierce, proud, and very general way, the honour and integrity of "his" class; and how much in character was it for him to conclude with a recitation of a new Russian poem, and to call attention to some inner echoes of lines by Pushkin which might otherwise have escaped us. But he was also making an important political point. That there was a ferment, was for him undeniable; that this was not couched in formulations which reflected Isaiah Berlin's notions of what constitutes high principle and positive philosophical ideals seemed to him only natural under the circumstances. When Russian intellectuals, who have been imprisoned and intimidated for decades, now refuse to say the word *"yes"* on command (he was referring to the literary "conspiracy of silence" which has been so infuriating to *Pravda*)—*"and this you don't call political?"*

"I reel under Katkov's blows," said Professor Berlin gently in his rejoinder, standing as straight and solid as an oak. He nevertheless repeated his impressions that the tendencies of intellectual dissent had still to become coherent, and that this would only be possible in the unlikely event of "the lid remaining open." Marxism had died as a positive ideal, and dialectical materialism was just so much "petrified gibberish." As far as he could make out from his talks with Russian "near-intellectuals," they were "amiable, sincere, unambitious, with no real plan or even hope of change...." What would probably happen would be that the Government would eliminate a few excesses, find a new adjustment—in effect, buy them off.

LACKING deep-down basic antagonisms on all the problems of the day, the debates were often only in the nuances. Or, as Alex Inkeles remarked, "one relieves the boredom of unanimity with the excitement of misquoting somebody else...." It was not the least useful task of Daniel Bell's diverting paper on "Ten Theories in Search of Reality" to remind us of how many formidable schools of Soviet interpretation were yet to be heard from. Where were the anthropologists, the psychoanalysts, the Kremlinologists? ("If you don't know where you are going," Mr. Bell quoted from an ancient source, "any road will take you there.")

In five days the word "ambivalence" had not fallen once, yet a small library of works has been produced in order to explain Soviet behaviour and Soviet Russian character by means of this "anthropological concept"(e.g., Geoffrey Gorer and others). Nor in five days had the suggestion of "homosexuality" been heard, although nobody less influential than the United States Air Force had once underwritten an immense study of Bolshevism (by Nathan Leites) dedicated to the proposition that the "primal image of Lenin" was derived, psychoanalytically speaking, as a "reaction-formation" to fears of death and latent homosexual impulses.*

* E.g., Leites: "...the Bolshevik character is a 'reaction' to the moods of the 19th-century intelligentsia, nervous, soul-searching, brooding, introspective... to the Oblomovs who slept away their lives, to the Rudins, the high-flown talkers but never-doers, to the indecisive, soul-sick, moody students.... In contrast to the Russian intelligentsia who spoke of ultimate things and sacred values, the Bolsheviks maintain silence about the sacred. Against the vice of outpouring emotion, the Bolsheviks uphold the virtue of reserve. Against the older Russian tendency to depressed passivity, introspection, nervous impressionability, and excited babbling, against the protracted searchings for metaphysical truths and the posing of unanswerable questions—against all these, there is the determinism of history, the certainty of purpose, the commitment to action, the ability not to take personal offence, the 'masculinity' of action."

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As for the Kremlinologists, although Boris Meissner made a valiant attempt to defend this technique with somewhat ponderous German methodology ("what we are practising is not *Kreml-astrologie* but *Kreml-astronomie!*"), it was the late Franz Borkenau who was missing, that dark genius of the black art and science, who, in the last weeks of his life, had written (in May) that the Khrushchev-Malenkov conflict was moving to a climax and that Kaganovich was no longer allied with the former....*

IN THE final conference phase of "high seriousness," the main discussion revolved around the deliberately speculative views of Raymond Aron and Hugh Seton-Watson on the evolution of the Soviet system towards a more "rational" order. A distinguished historian, only fifteen years ago, could write that "Russia with all her changes, still largely remains the same"—

"All Russian régimes have been sudden and arbitrary... Old Russia was always rough, with its Siberian exiles... Planning, a characteristic feature of the new régime, is not as new at first glimpse as it looks to be... Even the 'Party'—that unique misnomer of the vocation of leadership—is not really new: but rather a new application of an ancient institution, the priesthood...." (*Sir John Maynard.*)

In contrast, Professor Seton-Watson strongly urged the conference that it divert its eyes from the spectacle of the unique Russian past to the illuminating patterns of the general *European* evolution—

"The similarities between the Soviet 'toiling intelligentsia' and the Western bourgeoisie of the middle period of industrial development (say, Britain in 1880, Germany and the United States in 1900), especially the similar character of its social prestige and privileges, of its power over the masses, and of its cultural philistinism (with its peculiarly 'Victorian' flavour) seem to me to be more important than the differences...

"The pressure of the State-Bourgeois ethos on the ruling party élite may be compared with the pressure of the Western private bourgeois ethos on the Catholic Church in the 15th and 16th centuries, as described for instance by Max Weber or R. H. Tawney. Whether we shall see a Reformation or a Counter-Reformation, or something quite different from either, it would be imprudent to predict. One should however remember that nowhere in Europe did the struggle end in the bourgeoisie taking over the power either of the Church or of the aristocracy, but in compromises of various kinds between these three forces...."

It is hardly conceivable that such speculations would have been spun into motion without a growing recognition of some major turning-point in Soviet Russia's social and historical development. If, as Mr. Aron suggested, Soviet society, with the improvement in its standard of living, its culture, and its technology, is becoming "economically more rational" (and, at the same time, losing its ideological fervour), how far—over the decades—can one expect Soviet society to go in the direction of economic rationalisation and "the return to common sense?"

"I AM accused of begging the question," ran Aron's defence in the debate, "but I am only putting it...."

And even in Richard Lowenthal's final summation what emerged were—more questions....

"What is the nature and impact of the economic and social, legal and administrative changes which the Soviet Union has undergone since Stalin's death? How far can they be interpreted as temporary devices adopted by the Kremlin leaders to cope with a transitory situation and liable to be revoked at will, and how far must they be seen as the more or less irreversible result of fundamental long-term trends in Soviet society which will in turn modify the character of the Party régime itself?"

The dialectics of debate had come full circle. Down into the buttery of St. Antony's went the experts for their final scotch and their last licks. And little did they suspect that Nikita Khrushchev, over his own vodka, was at that very moment most deeply involved with similar questions, in his own donnish way.

* Mr. Bell seemed to be not unsympathetic to these kinds of speculation, which focus primarily on the power struggles in the political élite and seek to identify the shifting coalitions ("who-is-doing-in-whom" is one way of translating Lenin's famous *kto-k'vo*). "While open to easy satire, it is the supercilious who mocks it at his peril, as the New York *Post* once learned when it scoffed at the speculation arising out of the fact that all the Bolshevik leaders but Beria had appeared *en masse* at the Bolshoi ballet. 'Perhaps Beria doesn't like ballet,' said the *Post* archly. Perhaps he didn't, but we never had the opportunity to find out, for two days later came the announcement that Beria had been arrested as a traitor...."

Borkenau himself, as he once almost conceded to me, had a distinctively "Shakespearean" interpretation of the drama in the Kremlin—at the end of every act, at least three corpses on the stage.

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LETTERS

IGOR STRAVINSKY

I was interested to read the reminiscences of Mr. Stravinsky, which you published in ENCOUNTER for July. . . . Mr. Clive Bell has written a book called *Old Friends*. In it, he describes a meeting with Proust. Mr. Stravinsky, in your article, also describes a meeting with Proust. Mr. Bell says (pp. 179–180) that a Mr. Shiff held a supper party in honour of Diaghilev "after the first night in Paris of some ballet or other." Shiff's purpose was to gather together the four men he most admired—Picasso, Stravinsky, Joyce, and Proust. The first two were there on time. It was after midnight when Joyce arrived, the worse for wear. Between two and three o'clock Proust "clad in exquisite black with white kid gloves" arrived and, seating himself next to Stravinsky, asked him whether he liked Beethoven's "late sonatas and quartets." Stravinsky was rude to him. Joyce began to snore. And Mr. Bell made good his escape with Marcella Meyer.

Mr. Stravinsky says he last met Proust in June, 1922, at a party given by his friend Princess Violette Murat, after his première at the Grand Opera. Proust was there "elegantly and Frenchly dressed, wearing gloves and a cane." He talked enthusiastically to Stravinsky about Beethoven's late quartets. Stravinsky did not share the enthusiasm.

Could this be the same meeting? It would be interesting to know. If it is, then I wonder how much Mr. Stravinsky left out of his short and casual account, and how much Mr. Bell added to his good after-dinner story? If this could be known, then the Gaunts and the Reads and the O'Faolains of this earth might approach this source at a jog-trot only.

R. BEN JONES

Exeter College, Cambridge

"EMMA"

MR. TRILLING'S article on *Emma* in your June issue is brilliant and unsatisfactory. Brilliant, because of the unexpected illuminations which it sheds; unsatisfactory, because Mr. Trilling seems to make so much of the difficulty of the book while scarcely mentioning its central theme. Thus, one can be grateful for, among other things, his fresh emphasis on the book's idyllic quality; but why, one wonders, does he largely ignore the relationship between Emma and Mr. Knightley? This, surely, is what the book is about, and it is here that a critic must seek to dispel whatever apparent difficulties it has to offer. Why does Mr. Trilling let slip this opportunity?

Can it be that, percipient critic though he is, he has overlooked the relationship's significance? "When the right time comes," he says, in one of his few references to it, "she [Emma] chooses her husband wisely and seriously and eagerly." It is with the word "chooses" that I quarrel. Here, as Mr. Trilling would presumably agree, is the relevant passage; it comes after Harriet's avowal that Mr. Knightley reciprocates her affection (*chap. xlvii*):

"Emma's eyes were instantly withdrawn; and she sat silently meditating, in a fixed attitude, for a few minutes. A few minutes were sufficient for making her acquainted with her own heart. A mind like hers, once opening to suspicion, made rapid progress: she touched—she admitted—she acknowledged the whole truth. Why was it so much worse that Harriet should be in love with Mr. Knightley, than with Frank Churchill? Why was the evil so dreadfully increased by Harriet's having some hope of a return? It darted through her with the speed of an arrow, that Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself!"

This is not, certainly, the description of a choice; nor does Jane Austen herself want us to look at it like this, as the first sentence of the following chapter shows:

"Till now that she was threatened with its loss Emma had never known how much of her happiness depended on being first [Jane Austen's italics] *with Mr. Knightley, first in interest and affection."*

It is therefore surely wrong, in the light of these quotations, to say that Emma "chooses her husband." Choice is nothing if not a conscious and controlled act; Emma comes to be engaged through a long-drawn-out and largely unconscious process which ends, as the passages quoted above suggest, in a *realisation*; Emma, by means of the various incidents of the novel, is *made aware* of her innate affinity with Mr. Knightley—with Mr. Knightley, and what he stands for.

For it's what Mr. Knightley represents that gives his relationship with Emma (and the book) its depth. He himself states his position in commenting on Frank Churchill's letter (*chap. li*):

"My Emma, does not everything serve to prove

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more and more the beauty of truth and sincerity in all our dealings with each other?"

This is an affirmation of what may be called "personal" values, and Mr. Knightley has consciously held them from the beginning; moreover, by the time he makes this remark, Emma agrees with him, as the following sentence shows. But for most of the book, she *has not* agreed with him; the values she has adhered to have been "social" values. This is crude terminology; but the antithesis is—worked out in dramatic terms—the novel's point. Emma judges people by their manner (her meeting with Robert Martin on the Donwell road in *chapter iv* is a good example of this). She is a snob because of the importance she attaches to the social graces; and the various incidents of the novel—the muddle over Mr. Elton's charade, the unkindness to Miss Bates, Frank Churchill's duplicity among them—are designed to undermine this attachment and free Emma for the acceptance of Mr. Knightley's attitude—and Mr. Knightley. Furthermore, I use the word "designed" deliberately; for it seems as if, in humiliating Emma, Jane Austen was consciously attacking an aspect of the 18th century which had always had potentialities for civilisation but which, by the time of writing, had become a vice. Emma's eventual betrothal is self-discovery engineered by experience; it is also the defeat of the social in favour of the modern individual consciousness. (I do not agree with Mr. Trilling when he says that Emma's rebuff to Miss Bates is the product of a "modern consciousness"; it seems to me the result of having the wrong sort of 18th-century consciousness.)

Unsupported by detailed consideration of the text as it is, this analysis must necessarily seem crude. But it is an approach which I believe to be profitable and one which, if followed up, would show that Mr. Trilling makes too much of the difficulty of this great book.

M. H. Statham

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ENDRE HAVAS

One of the footnotes of my article "The Revolution of the Word," published in the April issue of Encounter, contained an ambiguous sentence about Endre Havas, Hungarian Communist poet tortured to death in the A.V.H. prison for having worked for Count Michael Károlyi during the war "carrying out Party directives." It is true that Havas had been a Communist in his early youth and was again converted to it from 1947 or 1948 onwards; but at the time of the war, when he became associated with Count Károlyi, he had no more to do with Communists than anyone who fought with them against the Nazis. There is no doubt about it that Soviet leadership of world Communism wanted at that time a united front, not only with independent Radicals, such as Count Károlyi was, but indeed with everyone who was willing to take part in the anti-Hitler war effort; I, in my somewhat sweepingly phrased footnote, mainly wanted to point out how hypocritical it was on the part of the Communists to reproach him for an association which at that time they would have approved of in any case.

Paul Ignotus

London, W.2

"ARNOLD TOYNBEE'S MILLENNIUM"

D. C. Somervell, who by Mr. Trevor-Roper's definition plays Paul to Toynbee's Jesus, has probably done his Master a dis-service. The volumes are condensed to two, and a solicitous Somervell has appended an outline of argument, only a few pages long, to each. The upshot is that every college boy with pretensions, every *arriviste* in the world of snobs can give Toynbee his knocks without troubling to read what he says. People who do not know Constantine Palæologus from Monomachus from Porphyrogenitus, or Ibn-Khaldun from Avicenna, can demolish the argument—Challenge and Response, Withdrawal and Return, and the Nemesis of Creativity—while spilling a martini. As an older snob I find this dull.

More puzzling are the professional critics. Who can miss the note of fury and passion in Peter Geyl, Muller, Frankel, or for that matter in the author of "Arnold Toynbee's Millennium?" If Toynbee is an arrogant man, and I am prepared to admit that he is, his public manners are still good. But his critics all seem to be rude fellows; and in a world that counts a treatise on the Physiocrats a respectable achievement, or subsidises research into the peck-order of a Mississippi high school, are these volumes so much worthy of contempt?

The dilettantes are easy to understand: they are the ones who listen to Johann Christian Bach, but never to Tchaikovsky; they will read Camoëns, but not Milton (until Milton has *his* revival). But why is Geyl "unable to express his disgust?" Why does Muller open his book with a picture of a dying Constantinople that is a travesty of Toynbee's ethical and religious belief? Why does your author speak of Messiah, Mish-Mash, and "this huge, presumptuous, and utterly humourless work?"

The answers come ready, but I do not think they are enough. The critics have reputations to make and books to write (and indeed, in America, we have just seen one author travelling up and down the land beguiling Zionist audiences with the picture of Toynbee the Anti-Semite). Or perhaps it is envy for a vast reputation. Or if these meaner reasons will not do, they are craftsmen who are honour-bound to expose a monstrous fraud. For myself, I think there is something more.

It is easy enough to attack Mr. Trevor-Roper as a bad reader—rather less careful in his analysis of Toynbee than Toynbee is of civilisation. After all, Toynbee does *not* pronounce judgment on Western

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civilisation in his first volumes; his coy refusal to say what he thinks is one of the most irritating features of the Old Testament. The impending close of our Time of Troubles could not, in Toynbee's system, spell the early end of the West, since dissolution must first be preceded by the Universal State. To imply that Western civilisation broke down with the Renaissance and Reformation is not to ignore the immense technological and cultural flowering since then; Toynbee dates the breakdown of Hellenic civilisation from the Peloponnesian War, but as a good classicist he would hardly dismiss Euclid and Archimedes, or Plato, Polybius, Theocritus, and Virgil as negligible quantities. Nor is it so funny to treat the first and second World Wars as two "bouts" of the same conflict: who remembers that there were *two* Peloponnesian Wars (separated by the Peace of Nicias), or quarrels with the judgment that the Carthaginians, in what was essentially the same cause, returned to the attack under Hannibal and his brothers? Time has a way of shrinking our big momentary events to something like truer size.

The issue is more complex: Toynbee is not, as Mr. Trevor-Roper maintains, anti-Western. But he is, in the phrase, "oecumenical" in his views. He is the child of the West; but he knows that humanity and the West are not synonymous. In this he is a symptom of the trend—the great 20th-century trend—he discerns, in short, the transfer of power to the non-Western world. I think this is the nub of the matter. He offends the megalomania of Western man.

I find myself wholly out of sympathy with Toynbee's egregious religiosity; I ignore it—I skip. Has Mr. Trevor-Roper never learned to skip? Toynbee's views on art are quaint and Edwardian. Toynbee badly underestimates technology. And Toynbee, Professor Geyl tells us, is hopelessly wrong about Afrikaans: it is a culture vehicle, though some of us may still wonder.

Where does all this leave us? It leaves us with a man of rich historical insight—though four out of five times he may be wrong. It leaves us with a book that is very uneven—certainly there is a falling off in the last volumes. But it is time to dismiss Yin and Yan, Mother Isis, and the Infatuation with the Capitalisation of Words and get down to cases. There is much stuff for thought in these pages. I will leave it to the careful reader to decide where.

The readers of ENCOUNTER will all pride themselves on being *post*-Marxists rather than anti-Marxists, and I suggest that it is time that we became post-Toynbeens too. (Surely Mr. Trevor-Roper will not allege that Marx was less odious a personality, or his doctrines unalloyed less pernicious for clear thinking.) But to do this we will have to give up our rôle as Parochial Man.

Some years back, when I was living in Holland, a bookseller in Leyden pointed to Professor Geyl passing in the street. "There goes the famous Professor Geyl—the man who demolished Toynbee." I was amused: *I* had never heard of the professor, and I had not known Toynbee was demolished. I set it down as a piece of intellectual chauvinism. England had its Toynbee, but the Dutch had Peter Geyl. They were a small nation, I reflected, and must content themselves with critics.

I was wrong. The Dutch are a small nation, but Professor Geyl spoke for a larger chauvinism, for a Western World that was taking *its* hard knocks. I do not write off this Western world, nor do I think its story is over. But if there are any consolations in philosophy, I find the panorama of Toynbee's multiplicity of cultures reassuring. And if it comes to that, and atomic war should obliterate all the civilisations, there is still Toynbee to tell us that the Congo pigmies will pull our chestnuts out of the fire.

EDMUND O. STILLMAN

Rye, New York

LITERARY COMPETITION

THE weekly magazine "OGGI" of Milan, of which I am the London correspondent, has launched a literary competition, with a prize of five million lire, for an unpublished novel. The competition is open to writers of all nationalities and novels in English will not have to be translated.

Competition rules and regulations will be sent on request to me at the address below.

A. M. CIRIELLO

13 Wimpole St.
London, W.1

"MUTATION MORALITY"

THOUGH nearly everything that Mr. Wallace says in his letter in the June issue of ENCOUNTER is true he has, I think, certain misconceptions regarding the nature of the evolutionary process that cause him to be rather hard on Mr. Wayland Young. I should like to try to clarify the nature of the relationship existing between mutation rate and evolution, and to show that while no biologist would deny the possibility of beneficial mutations, it is generally agreed that to increase the mutation rate would be harmful, immediately and in the long run.

The rate at which mutations occur is, like nearly every other character of living organisms, the product of evolution. It is most likely that the first living organisms had a far greater mutation rate than exists at present. It is known that mutation rates are controlled genetically, that is, there are certain genes which, if they mutate, alter the rate at which the other genes mutate. Therefore the mutation rate is affected by natural selection, and from this we can assume that the present rate is the most advantageous one, and that to alter it, by radiations or otherwise, will be harmful.

If a population is in equilibrium with a stable environment, natural selection will have acted in the past in two ways.

(a) It will have selected, wherever this is possible,

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that particular form of a gene that is most advantageous. That is, in those cases where it is possible to consider a gene as being "harmful" or otherwise, the least harmful will have been selected. As the vast majority of mutations that may occur have already occurred in the past, and so have been acted on by selection, they will be of a kind that has been rejected in the past.

(b) It will have achieved balance in polymorphic characters. The concept of polymorphism is of some difficulty, and I must enlarge. A population is said to show polymorphism when there exist distinct classes of individuals separated by genetically controlled differences. Thus humans are polymorphic, amongst other things, for eye colour and blood groups. Now the interesting thing about polymorphism is that it allows the existence in a population of several forms of a gene controlling a single character. Selection does not, as in (a) above, weed out all of them except one. There is no "good" gene. The reason for this is as follows. Suppose that a gene can exist in two forms, say "A" and "a." Now in a polymorphism it is usually found that the arrangement in which "a" appears with "A" is a better combination than either of the two other possibilities, namely, "A" with "A," or "a" with "a." For example, sickle cell anæmia, which is usually fatal, is widespread in Africa. It is caused by the appearance, in the same person, of two mutant genes ("a" with "a"). Nevertheless, although these genes would seem to be disadvantageous, "a" is widespread throughout the population. This is because a person who has one of the mutant genes and one of the normal ("A" with "a"), not only does not have the anæmia, but is also immune from malaria, which is not true of the person who has two of the normal genes ("A" with "A"). As a result of this a balance is achieved between the relative numbers of the two kinds of genes that will be found in the population and, which is most important, this balance is not altered by changes in the mutation rate, but only by alteration in the forces of selection acting on the various polymorphic classes. Thus sickle cell anæmia is very rare in North American negroes because the sickle cell gene, when present singly ("A" with "a"), confers so little advantage on the bearer because malaria is almost absent.

It is thought by most biologists, though not all, that the greater part of human variation is due to this phenomenon of polymorphism. This, coupled with the fact that evolution is brought about by the action of selection on varying individuals, has the interesting corollary that the effect of increasing the mutation rate will be merely to produce more of the genes that have been weeded out previously by selection.

I said earlier that selection will act in this way on populations that are in equilibrium with a stable environment. We are not fully in equilibrium, nor is our environment stable. Nevertheless it is true that selection is so quick in picking up any *newly advantageous* mutant that may occur that an increase in mutation rate of reasonable size will not materially affect the rate at which this mutant will spread through the population. On the other hand, polymorphic genes are at present in proportions that are rigidly determined by the forces of selection, and mutation rate does not affect them. In other words, the effect of an increase in the mutation rate will be, for all practical purposes, merely to increase the number of definitely disadvantageous genes in the population.

I think therefore that if we look at the problem of mutation rates from an evolutionary point of view, we must come to the same conclusion as we do if we only take account of the next few generations.

I should like to add, in case this letter is read by people who are specialists in genetics, that this account of the evolutionary mechanism, and of polymorphism, is extremely simplified. To bring in all the possible complications would, however, merely confuse the "educated laymen" without, I think, materially affecting the argument.

J. D. Currey

Brasenose College,
Oxford

MY LIFE AND HARD CASH

(I write this comment in pencil, having pawned my typewriter: as convenient a method of borrowing £5 as I know.) Kathleen Nott's article pleased me tremendously, especially the beginning of it: *at last,* I thought, *someone is talking about it.* The subject thereupon became less dreadful. Even, at times, funny. Freudian as the bulk of her article was, and less amusing in the middle than in the opening sentence, it overfulfilled its author's modest intentions. "A minor contribution," yes, but as far as I know, the first. "A 'phenomenological' psychology of money." I drink to it.

My own attitude (between drinks) fluctuates somewhat. I regard as extremists both the young poet who says he has made more money out of verse in a year than any other English poet, *and* another young man of my acquaintance who is said to hate money so much that he will only accept it in exchange for the most arduous and unpleasant labours, although he is in fact both talented and highly intelligent. I hate the new five-pound notes, but recognise that they are in fact worth less than the old ones were. And I apologise for my existence —I mean my pencilled letter—and retire, resolved not at any rate to *borrow* the money I need to recover my typewriter. Kathleen Nott has cleared the air somewhat; that is always a good thing.

Oliver Bernard

Walberswick
Suffolk

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BOOKS

Politics, Sacred and Profane

WHY did they confess? Why did the innocent go to their deaths praising the authorities who condemned them? And—more surprising still—why did the guilty, having conspired and plotted, go to the executioner's block like lambs, exuding compliance? Historians have, on the whole, skirted the issue as being too exotic in character for their prosaic discipline; though some "solved" it simply by taking both the Attorney-General and his victims at their word. Such questions are bound to tease our comprehension. We are much bothered, especially, by the problem of "sincerity." There is, of course, the fact of torture; but that is not really satisfying, since the words go so far beyond a reluctant and resigned admission. Besides, torture was a normal part of the process of interrogation in such cases, and one was not spared anything (or not much, anyway) by readily conceding to all that was demanded. What confounds this problem is the fact that the confessions were made in the most general terms, following a fairly set pattern—and yet there is nothing about them of the merely mechanically coerced. The generalities and the pattern, obviously, were not merely imposed; they were also accepted. As Professor Lacey Baldwin Smith writes in his remarkable essay on "English Treason Trials and Confessions in the 16th Century" (*Journal of the History of Ideas*, October 1954):

"Those about to die announced that they had come hither to die, and they were careful to point out to the surrounding multitude that they had been judged by the laws of the land and that they were content to accept the penalties which the law required. After granting the legality of their execution, they usually went on to hold themselves up as examples of the frightful fate in store for those who dared to sin against God and their king. Finally, they ended by requesting their audience to pray on their behalf, that God and king would mercifully forgive them their trespasses, and then, in a closing burst of loyalty, they expressed the hope that their gracious sovereign might long and happily reign...."

What would seem to be taking place on such occasions is a kind of religious ritual. And once we look at it in this way, a great many other things fall into place. For this is a spectacle we are familiar with: to see men, in all outward appearances the quintessence of rectitude, confessing sincerely their "sins" to a believing congregation.

The difference between a religious confession and a merely juridical one corresponds to the difference between what a medieval philosopher called *immanent* acts and *transient* acts, an immanent act comprehending the internal motive as well as the outward bodily motion, a transient act being limited to the observed, external action itself. Perfect justice, like perfect virtue, is not a matter of externals alone; nevertheless, it is impossible for any man to set himself up as a judge of immanent actions, for the depths of the human heart must always be impenetrable to him. As St Thomas put it:

"...Man can make law about those things about which he can judge. But the judgment of man cannot be about interior acts, which are hidden, but only about exterior movements, which are apparent; and yet for the perfection of virtue it is required that man be right in both kinds of acts.

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Hence, human law could not sufficiently control and order interior acts, but it was necessary that for this, divine law supervene."

"Divine law," of course, took on some kind of earthly form. The Church, the Pope, and then later the King and his State, "treason" against whom had the status of "evil thoughts" against God—they did not have to be legally visible in order to be legally punished. The intent to do treason was equivalent to the act itself; and the intent could be "inferred" according to the "logic" of *raison d'état*—a man who was, in the opinion of the authorities, dangerous to the State was therefore guilty as against the State.

This system worked well enough (from the authorities' point of view, at least) so long as the King's judgment had a religious as well as a judicial quality. Confessions of treason were forthcoming in the same way as confessions of witchcraft; to be accused by God (or God's vicar) is to be guilty. It would have been unthinkably presumptuous to reject the indictment, and it would have been pointless as well, since the accusation was itself a conviction from which there was—literally and physically, as well as spiritually—no escaping; all that was left was to bow before the sovereign power. Shortly before George Boleyn was executed, for crimes he almost certainly never committed (in particular, incest with his sister Anne), he exclaimed: "I deserve death even though I had a thousand lives—yea, even to die with far more and worse shame, and dishonour, than hath ever been heard of before...." If, upon rare occasion, some obstinate fellow should burn unrepentant and blasphemous, screaming imprecations and proclaiming his innocence, that was only another warning—for who would choose such a mad dog's death, as against the prospect of reconciliation and inner peace?

With the secularisation and general profanation of authority—both temporal and spiritual—in succeeding centuries, this whole arrangement dissolved. No guilt any longer attached to disobedience—the contrary was true, if anything. The word "revolution" took on its modern, relatively benign, political connotation as something natural and inevitable. Confessions were neither asked for nor obtained. It was, instead, the age of wordy and rhetorical martyrdom. Never in recorded history was political power less sacrosanct; never did political dissidence give rise to so good a conscience. One can even say that moral authority and the aura of sanctity were captured by the spirit of revolt, while the established order was denuded of all *a priori* justification and legitimacy. Even in Russia, where the Czar pretended to a premodern right of rule, young men and women assassinated some very important people and then went off to the gallows—or, more frequently, Siberia—with resounding and self-justifying closing speeches. Moreover, political consent and political loyalty themselves became rather modest things. The sphere of immanent actions was left to the private conscience to manage, and in it no outside authority was allowed except for limited visits, by formal invitation, on ceremonial occasions.

In our own lifetime, politics have once again tended to become something sacred: all the various Movements have tried to claim for themselves the transcendental majesty of a divinely-appointed sovereign and the authority of Divine Law (sometimes in the guise of "Science" or "History"). This development has caught us unprepared; we had thought the profanations of the 18th and 19th centuries were irreversible. It was the genius of Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* to rediscover, with fresh eyes, the mechanism of the progress as it emerged in our day. But, where actual personal experience is lacking, it is too easy to see the process as being purely mechanical. William Sargent's *Battle for the Mind** is full of fascinating detail on the physiology of "brain-washing" and notably on the way physical pressure can transform moral sensibilities; but it is a maddening book even for a psychiatrist to have written. Mr. Sargent proceeds blithely from literary analogies between dogs and men to literal identities. He suggests that modern "brain-washing" is an invention of Pavlov, though he is forced to concede that neither the Russian nor Chinese inquisitors seem ever to have read him. Above all, he utterly confuses the coercion practised by a sacerdotal régime upon its faithful with all of modern "brain-washing," and being "brain-washed" with the psychology of religious conversion itself. In other words, he puts the ritual before the religion, the effect before the cause.

In this, it must be said, he rather resembles our modern "brain-washers," though they are discovering that not all myths—even those most fantastically believed in—have in them the stuff of durable religions. The Koestlerian dialectic does operate within the small circle of "true believers." But it is being dangerously naïve to assume that, where there are true believers, there must be a true belief that can establish itself in society as a whole; or that "brain-washing" can do the job of establishing it, as against the more conventional and traditional task of sustaining it. One comes away from a reading of Robert Ford's candid, harrowing narration of his experience in Chinese Communist hands†

* Heinemann. 25s.

† *Captured in Tibet.* By Robert Ford. Harrap. 18s.

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with the impression of having attended an ingenious and exhausting "third degree," rather than a profound struggle for the mind, to say nothing of the soul.

And indeed, the real problem is whether this commingling of religious and political authority, of the realms of immanent and transient actions, is so inexorable as many would have us think. We have been told so often the liberal era is dead, that we tend to forget that a journalistic obituary is not the same as a medical certificate. This is not to deny that the reaction against liberal-secular politics is real: and it is one of the merits of Norman Cohn's learned and provocative *Pursuit of the Millennium** to remind us how deep in Western history is embedded the messianic-apocalyptic impulse that would impose the yoke of salvation on all men, how permanent and recurrent a theme this is, and how close is the filiation of modern totalitarianism—Right and Left—with the militant heterodoxies of the middle and early-modern ages. (The phrase, "The Third Reich," was a conscious adaptation by the neo-Nazi, Moeller van den Bruck, of Joachim of Flora's 12th-century vision of a "Third Kingdom" of the Holy Ghost, which would complete the triad of word history begun by the Father and given shape by the Son. Similarly, Marx's dream of perfect Communism, as being both the very first and absolutely final stages of universal history, has obvious connections with Anabaptist mythology.) In fact, if there is any criticism to be made of Mr. Cohn's book it is that he does not suggest the ways in which the Enlightenment itself, even in its less extravagant forms, had a deep chiliastic tint: "profanation," like blasphemy, is commonly but an inverted religiosity.

Yet, there is something curiously weak and artificial about the reactionary impulse, in its 20th-century manifestations. One is always tempted to enjoy the prefixes "quasi" and "pseudo"—quasi-religious, pseudo-messianic—for the new pretenders to a legitimate and recognised Orthodoxy. Perhaps it is the permeation of our culture by modern science and technology which makes the Spirit of the Age shy away from utter-self-surrender. Perhaps it is that the world is simply older now and more history-conscious, so that it is incapable of the same unconditional enthusiasm. Whatever the explanation, it does seem to be exceedingly difficult for politics in the 20th century to obtain, not only formal consent, but genuine faith as well. The effort is made, as we know to our cost; but one finds it hard to believe that, for instance, future generations will look back on Adolf Hitler with the same compassion they

* Secker and Warburg. 42s.

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now extend to John of Leyden—who was also an insane and bloody tyrant, but whose absurd beliefs had a kind of innocent grandeur. And after forty years of Russian Communism, there is an aura of boredom about it that affects Russians and non-Russians alike. Even in China, one now has the impression that the "new faith" is dying young—though, of course, the régime it produced gives no sign of following suit.

The question is no longer: "why do they confess?" They rarely do, and—more significant—one no longer listens. The darkness at noon was real and bewildering, for a time; but that eclipse has lost its power to awe. In part, we have got used to living with it; but in larger part, we are aware that the ideological atmosphere has been rapidly thinning out, and that it is possible to see through the darkness after all.

Irving Kristol

FICTIONEERS

ALTHOUGH by now, two centuries after *Pamela*, we have perhaps enough, each month, in Paris, London, Rome, Berlin, and New York, in Tokyo, Calcutta, Moscow, and Mexico City, writers write them, publishers publish them, readers read them. Below are some notes on almost a dozen recent examples of fictioneering.

63: DREAM PALACE. By *James Purdy*. (Gollancz. 12s. 6d.). The latest avantgarde march to the rear. A *fiasco d'estime*, issued under the proper auspices: New Directions is the American publisher, and the book is dedicated to Dame Edith Sitwell, dealer in premature laurel wreaths (wholesale only). The title novella is a kind of low-keyed nightmare in which the prose is as flat as the action is bizarre. One might think it a mannerist exercise were not the author obviously sincere. As it is, the effect is of a fantasy, full of violence, sadism, and homosexuality, reported to his analyst by an inarticulate neurotic. Joyce, Eliot, Hemingway, and others of the old, classic avantgarde were also "difficult" at first reading, because they were establishing new idioms which later became everyday language. But Mr. Purdy is unable to break out of his private world, which is to say he is not talented, the ability to communicate to others one's own world being one mark of talent. His work is typical of the present avantgarde, which really shouldn't be called that because it doesn't clear the way for the main army to follow later but rather settles down snugly in permanent little camps off to the side which will never be on the main line of march. There are also nine short stories in the volume which are more conventional and, I think, better than *63: Dream Palace*, but which also reveal more clearly the author's limitations, since they can be compared with other work.

THE OTHERS AND RICHARD SORDELLO. By *Alberta Murphy*. (Jonathan Cape. 15s.). The mixture as before, with bells on. The bells are attached to a jester's cap, for Miss Murphy, without otherwise trying to establish rapport with the reader, aspires to humour. But a joke is the least private of art forms.

MY APPRENTICESHIPS and MUSIC-HALL SIDELIGHTS. By *Colette*. (Secker & Warburg. 15s.). How delightful, to one long in Purdy pent, to read a rearguard professional! These are both minor works, as compared with the Chéri novels, but so readable, written with such humour, spirit, intelligence, and written so well. *Music-Hall Sidelights* is a series of brief sketches of the show-people Colette knew during her ten years in variety. They are "slight" but always vivid and often moving.... *My Apprenticeships* (what clumsy titles, by the way) is an account of her life with her first husband, the monstrous and slightly sinister "Willy," a middle-aged roué and literary operator who married her young, discovered her talent, and sweated her to produce the enormously successful Claudine series (which he signed). There is so much in it that one regrets there isn't more, that instead of the present rather diffuse memoir, which has as much about her friends of that period as about Willy, she had concentrated on a fuller account of her marriage. But perhaps even Colette, objective, indeed generous as her attitude is towards the ineffable Willy, could not bear to look too directly at this part of her life.

SNOW COUNTRY. By *Yasunari Kawabata*. (Secker & Warburg. 14s.). Disciplined, brief, poetic, and rigorously tasteful, *Snow Country* is a series of Japanese sketches in water-colour. Often literally: "Slender autumn grasses grew along the top of an earthen wall. The pale-yellow plumes were at their most graceful, and below each plume narrow leaves spread out in a delicate fountain." But a technique that catches very well the plumeyness of plumes doesn't work so well with narrative. Mr. Kawabata's theme is an unhappy love affair, in a Japanese winter resort, between a wealthy dilettante from Tokyo and a geisha girl. Despite the translator's heroic efforts to explain things in his introduction ("The final scene only brings the inevitable. We know, as Komako staggers from the burning warehouse with Yoko in her arms, that Komako and

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Shimamura have parted"), for me the characters were vague, the action opaque. So impressionalistic is the technique, so lacking the crude expository apparatus to which we in the West are accustomed, that often it is not clear even *where* things are happening. But it is not a case of East is East. The only other Japanese novel I have read, Lady Murasaki's *Genji*, reminded me of Proust and James; it seemed clearly a masterpiece and offered no special difficulties. But of course it was written a thousand years ago.

UNGUARDED HOUSE. By *Heinrich Böll*. (Arco. 15s.). Inside stuff. The reader drowns in the tepid, endless flow of subjectivity. Life in post-war Germany, as refracted through a half-dozen characters, especially two young boys. Like most child-centred novels, very "sensitive" and "aware." Too much so, in fact. Sensations, reveries, feelings become monotonous when they are just put down, one after another, without order or comment, endlessly. Just like life, perhaps, but not like art. And awareness, undisciplined by style and unsalted by wit, becomes as tedious as a leaking faucet.

REVOLUTION AND ROSES. By *P. H. Newby*. (Jonathan Cape. 15s.). Ineptly titled, neatly written, intermittently entertaining, this serio-comic novel about the 1952 Neguib-Nasser revolution shows the danger of mixing fictional genres. The theme is promising: an attractive English woman journalist lands in Alexandria on the day of the officers' *coup*, producing confusion and bringing out the contrast between the British and the Egyptian mentalities. But nothing is quite worked out; good comic characters are introduced (like Wyvell Spleen, the British journalist, and Waldo Grimbley, His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul) but are allowed to drift away unexploited. There are some very funny scenes and some fine comic inventions, but the effect is blurred because Mr. Newby seems undecided whether he is writing *Black Mischief* or *A Passage to India*. His main characters keep fluctuating between Waughian silhouettes and Forsterian portraits in depth. I think his talent is definitely for the former, and that his earlier, *The Picnic at Sakkara*, on the same theme of Anglo-Egyptian misunderstanding, was more successful because it was focused more on comedy.

THE HIRELING. By *L. P. Hartley*. (Hamish Hamilton. 13s. 6d.). One of those almost-good novels whose failure is so puzzling. Mr. Hartley, whose thirteenth book this is, writes well, but his secondary characters are better realised than his two chief ones, about whom one is simply not told enough (a common defect—the great-

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ness of Tolstoy lies partly in giving one so much information about his people). Perhaps the author scamps his hero and heroine because he himself never got to know them very well. Certainly Leadbitter's abrupt death seems inadequately motivated (however convenient as a way of resolving the plot), just as the suggestion, on the last page, that Lady Franklin will be regenerated by his memory has not been led up to and so is not very convincing. It is a pity because in its minor aspects, apart from the relationship of Leadbitter to Lady Franklin, this is a distinguished novel.

Across Paris. By *Marcel Aymé*. (The Bodley Head. 15s.). Twelve well-made, easily-read short stories, three of which seem to me first-rate: "The Seven-League Boots," "Rue de l'Évangile," and "The Picture-Well." (The first is a remarkable technical achievement: a modern fairy story in which the supernatural element seems neither forced nor whimsical—in short, natural.) Why the others are second-rate (except for a couple of third-raters) is a puzzle. I've also been disappointed in the two Aymé novels I've read, accomplished as they were. Is he too facile, does he write too much? But then, Balzac. Is it a lack of personality, a coldness, and a too great distance from his characters? But then, Tolstoy, who writes like the Recording Angel. Perhaps it's that Aymé often strains to introduce larger meanings than the actual story will contain. Sometimes the effect is grotesque and tasteless, as in "Dermuche," about a convict awaiting execution whom Jesus turns into a baby (because his prayers show him to be infantile) which, or who, is executed anyway, because it or he or she *is*, after all, Dermuche; from all of which proceed certain rather heavy-handed theological convictions. More often, a good realistic story, in the style of a tough-minded Chekhov, is spoiled by moralising and intellectualising, as in "Across Paris," which is excellent up to the climactic murder and then dissolves in unconvincing generalities. Perhaps it's just that Aymé's is a minor talent, one that can handle lesser themes but not the big ones. He is moving and true, for example, when he writes of the sufferings of the weak, of those whom Dostoievsky called "the insulted and injured," and this book's three good stories all centre on such people. But this, of course, is pathos, not tragedy.

The Mendelman Fire. By *Wolf Mankowitz*. (André Deutsch. 12s. 6d.). "Naturally my great-grandmother had a cow. Not that it was in any way a particularly good cow. It never won any prizes, it sometimes didn't give so much milk, one of its horns had got knocked off, and it would never come when it was called. It was an ordinary cow, a cow like any other, and when my great-grandmother went out at night to call, 'Masha, Masha' (because that was its name). . . ." At this point, I must admit I gave up reading "The Devil and the Cow" because it occurred to me that Mr. Mankowitz could go on like this indefinitely and, while he was paid for his time writing this particular bit of *Völkstümlerei*, I wasn't getting a nickel, as he might put it, for reading it. There are six other pseudo-folk stories in this volume, as well as the long title story, which is pseudo-Runyon (as Runyon is pseudo-Lardner), plus no less than ten carefully-manufactured anecdotes, all slicked up for quick sale. (Acknowledgments go to a wide variety of commercial enterprises, ranging from *Lilliput* to *The Atlantic Monthy*). The folk-ish tales deal with Jewish village life in pre-1917 Russia and are full of earthiness, salty humour, and other familiar ingredients. (Like Irishmen, Jews often think their racial traits and home-town customs more fascinating than they are; personally, I find shrewd old rabbis as boring as quaint old Irish pub-keepers.). The long title story is in the same factitious genre, merely switching the locale from Jewish village to Jewish business life: "In 1930 the whole world noticed that there was a depression because a lot of very big people went broke and jumped out of office windows and shot themselves."

A Long Day in a Short Life. By *Albert Maltz*. (John Calder. 18s.). Twenty-four class-angled hours in an American jail: the petty-bourgeois success-boy who finds The System is unjust, the militant Negro who has been framed up by the cops, *et al*. And always the dull beat of Maltzian prose, like a policeman's club on a striker's skull. Chapter XV begins: "Whatever the reactions of the other inmates to the events at supper, the two occupants of 124 were concerned with other matters." It ends: " 'This ol' world sure needs a lot of fixin', don't it?' McPeak said philosophically. 'I look to the labour movement to do a big part of it, too. Economics and politics—them's at the bottom of everythin', I believe.' 'Maybe so,' Lauter responded, and closed his eyes." I don't know whether Mr. Maltz, who was writing proletarian novels when the Angry Young Men were learning to spell, is still a Party-liner or not. Howard Fast has jumped off the locomotive of history, and so may have Albert Maltz. It really doesn't make much difference. The point is that the veteran author of three novels, seven plays, and a book of short stories still has his characters "respond" to each other.

The Company She Keeps. By *Mary McCarthy*. (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 15s.). Originally published in 1943 and long out of print, this is Mary McCarthy's first book. It consists of six short

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stories with a common heroine, Margaret Sargent, who is not to be confused with her author but is not to be wholly divorced from her, either. Time: the late thirties. Place: New York City. The first and last stories, which are the most subjective, seem to me the least successful; self-examination in them often becomes self-consciousness, sometimes even self-exploitation. But the middle four are in Miss McCarthy's best vein; they are social comedy of the highest order. "Rogue's Gallery," for example, still is funny on a fifth re-reading because of the wit and the inventiveness with which the author formulates a complete view of Mr. Sheer's personality—more of his destiny; by "complete," I mean extreme clarity of description—ruthless, implacable—combined with extreme charity of judgment.... These stories also suggest the atmosphere, the tone of the literary-left world of the thirties much as *The Great Gatsby* recreates the atmosphere of the twenties; there is an abundance of specific details that are precisely "right" for the period because they emerge from an imaginative feeling for the whole, for its peculiar, particular quality. I prefer the prose of these stories—wry and lean, direct, informal, journalistic, full of wisecracks—to some of Miss McCarthy's later, more elaborate prose. The "central" story is, I think, not the celebrated "The Man in the Brooks Brothers Shirt" but rather "Portrait of the Intellectual as a Yale Man," which is both a "social document"—through the thorough and acute analysis of the public personality of an individual—which cultural historians will neglect at their peril and also a commentary, accurate and ruthless and persistent—I like this quality in a good writer as much as I deplore it in a poor writer—on the American intelligentsia in general. As well as being extremely amusing for sixty-eight pages.

Dwight Macdonald

THE BUTCHER

The Tichborne Claimant. A Victorian Mystery. By Douglas Woodruff. *Hollis & Carter*. 30s.

The Claimant. The Tichborne Case Reviewed. By Michael Gilbert. *Constable*. 18s. 6d.

The Tichborne case is the nearest thing we have to the Dreyfus affair—an ostensibly legal dispute which boiled over into politics. The two make a strange contrast. In the affair the issues were clear as crystal, though the events were confused—anti-Semitism, the honour of the army, the Rights of Man, and so on. It is not difficult to understand why anyone was Dreyfusard or anti-Dreyfusard. But what made men rally to the Claimant? The forces behind the conflict were as obscure as the case itself. Yet the Tichborne case was a portent, hinting darkly at all sorts of developments which have now carried the day. A mass electorate chooses odd heroes; and the butcher of Wapping was the first of them, a sort of John the Baptist for Horatio Bottomley. The masses do not bother about the rules of evidence, indeed feel strongly against them. Hence the prolonged court-proceedings were irrelevant from the popular point of view; and even improved the Claimant's standing by going against him. He would have been far less popular if he had succeeded in demonstrating that he was in fact Sir Roger Tichborne. There is another, even more obscure point which neither of the present authors remarks on. Sir Roger Tichborne may have started in the landed aristocracy; the Claimant was a returned Colonial, and an independent one at that. Though the old order in England pulled him down, the Statute of Westminster may be regarded as the Claimant's revenge.

It is always agreeable for a reviewer to have two books on the same subject so that he can balance one against the other; particularly agreeable in this case when the two books are so very different and both have qualities of great distinction. Mr. Gilbert's is shorter, clearer, and more effective, the work of one who is at once a lawyer and a writer of detective-fiction. Mr. Woodruff's is much fuller with a good deal of new material which, like most fresh evidence, makes the story more confusing instead of simpler; it is better on atmosphere than on fact, and it loses grip in the courts which were after all a large part of the case. To put it crudely, Mr. Gilbert is a Rationalist who thinks that odd happenings from Claimants to ghosts can be explained away if one is careful enough. Mr. Woodruff belongs to the "no-smoke-without fire" school. Faced with anything puzzling, he is inclined to say: "there must be something in it." I should guess that he believes in miracles and that Mr. Gilbert does not. I found Mr. Gilbert's approach more sympathetic and therefore more convincing. Those who are credulous may be of a different mind. I have no scrap of doubt that Roger Tichborne was drowned at sea in 1854 and that the Claimant was Arthur Orton of Wapping. Mr. Woodruff thinks this sort of imposture difficult. He should consider the record (ignored also by Mr. Gilbert) of the forty-six Pretenders who claimed to be Louis XVII of France, the boy who perished in the Temple. They impersonated not only him, but each other as well. They were of all shapes and

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ages; some could speak no French. They all gathered a host of enthusiastic supporters. Compared to this, Orton had an easy time of it; and he often fell down badly. It is of no great moment now whether the Claimant was Tichborne, Orton, Castro, or Cresswell; but it makes a wonderful story. On one point both authors are lamentably ignorant. Neither seems to be aware that Sickert painted the Claimant's portrait. It is to be seen—but why should I reveal my little fragment of knowledge?

A. J. P. Taylor

IN DEFENCE OF REASON

Logic without Metaphysics. And Other Studies in the Philosophy of Science. By ERNEST NAGEL. *Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois.* $6.

PROFESSOR NAGEL is the most level-headed of philosophers. And I mean this mainly as a compliment. He discusses important questions, analyses them thoroughly, disposes of the nonsense that others may have talked about them, and comes up with plain and sensible answers of his own. He was a pupil of John Dewey, and though not himself a thoroughgoing pragmatist he has remained faithful to Dewey's criterion of "warranted assertibility." He is severe upon claptrap, especially if it is of a spiritualistic kind, but he is not, in general, dogmatic; his assertions are made with proper scientific caution, and one can be sure that they are warranted. At times one might wish that he would be a little more venturesome; that he would indulge his imagination or commit himself to some illuminating paradox: there is much to be said in philosophy for being interestingly wrong. But this self-restraint is suited to the part that he plays on the philosophical scene. I myself was once described by the late Mr. Wyndham Lewis as an "intellectual detective-sergeant," but however ardent I may have been in upholding the cause of reason, it was rather in the spirit of a vigilante. Professor Nagel is a commissioner of the intellectual police.

He is all the more qualified for this office in that he is one of the few philosophers who possess an adequate knowledge and understanding of modern science. Twenty years ago it was the fashion to proclaim that the future of philosophy lay in its becoming the logic of science: metaphysics having been discredited, there seemed no other useful road for it to follow. But things have happened otherwise. Metaphysics keeps on being disinterred, in order to be differently reburied, painstaking studies, with results of varying degrees of interest, are made of our ordinary use of words, the realism of common sense is piously defended, the experts in symbolic logic pursue their mathematical research, and the natural sciences are pretty much ignored. Philosophers who have the analytical ability to throw light upon the use of scientific concepts for the most part lack the necessary scientific training: and when eminent scientists venture into philosophy they nearly always make a hash of it. Professor Nagel's contributions to the philosophy of science are not dramatic; but they are capable, lucid, shrewd, and well-informed.

The essays and reviews which make up his latest book range in date from 1934 to 1955. There are ten essays and twenty reviews and they deal not only with questions of method and interpretation in the natural and social sciences, but also with logic, analytical philosophy, the problem of truth, and, in the case of one or two of the reviews, with social philosophy and the philosophy of education. Professor Nagel tells us in his short introduction that "except for one essay, and apart from minor changes in the others," these papers have all been reprinted in the form in which they originally appeared. The result is, as he himself admits, that when one reads the book through, one discovers certain "shifts and oscillations in doctrine and emphasis"; but the general impression is that of a strong continuity of outlook and tone.

The essay "In defense of Logic Without Metaphysics," from which the book takes its title, was originally a contribution to a symposium in which the other two participants appear to have taken the line that the laws of logic are somehow based upon "pervasive ontological traits of things in general." Opposing this obscurantism, Professor Nagel himself adopts a mildly conventionalist position, which he further elaborates in an essay "On Logic without Ontology." More interesting, to my mind, is an essay on "Symbolism and Science," where Nagel distinguishes carefully between different types of natural signs, and between natural signs and linguistic symbols, and argues that "what are called theories in the sciences are primarily instrumental to establishing linkage between descriptive symbols: theories formulate comprehensive relations between things and occurrences so as to permit some of them to serve as reliable natural signs of others." There is also a more technical essay on "A Formalization of Functionalism," which is difficult but impressive, and, among the philosophical pieces, an account of Analytic Philosophy in Europe, which was based on a tour which Professor Nagel made in 1935. The impressions which he then formed now appear somewhat outmoded, but they have a certain historical interest.

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Finally, there are three essays in defence of Naturalism, which is the term Professor Nagel chooses to characterise his own philosophical standpoint. "Naturalism," he tells us, "does not maintain that only what is material exists, since many things noted in experience—modes of action, relations of meaning, dreams, joys, plans, aspirations—are not as such material bodies or organizations of material bodies. What naturalism asserts as a truth about nature is that though *forms* of behaviour or *functions* of material systems are indefeasibly parts of nature, forms and functions are not themselves agents in their own realisation or in the realisation of anything else. In the conception of nature's processes which naturalism affirms, there is no place for the operation of disembodied forces, no place for the survival of personality after the corruption of the body which exhibits it."

The tone of the reviews is more polemical than that of the essays; they bring out the best in Professor Nagel's style. Several of them are devoted to the protection of the social sciences against attempts to make them unscientific, but there are also sharp attacks upon the philosophical crudities of Marxists, and upon the sort of mystification that is associated with the so-called "perennial philosophy." Some might complain that Professor Nagel devotes too much of his time and talent to this purely destructive work; but it is work that has to be done, and there can be few who are so well equipped as Professor Nagel is to do it.

A. J. Ayer

THE "TRUE LEFT"

The Opium of the Intellectuals. by RAYMOND ARON. *Secker and Warburg.* 35s.

MONSIEUR Raymond Aron is an enemy of political labels, but this need not restrain us from pasting one on him. He is an independent liberal markedly to the left of centre. Of himself he prefers to write: "As a Keynesian with a certain nostalgia for economic liberalism, as a supporter of agreement with Tunisian and Moroccan nationalism"—(and now, incidentally, most notably, and most courageously, with Algerian nationalism as well)—"... as one who is convinced that the strength of the Atlantic alliance is the best guarantee of peace, I shall be classed as either left-wing or right-wing according to whether economic policy, the North African problem, or relations between East and West are taken as the criterion."

In France, perhaps; but there is nothing in any of these attitudes which *our* political vocabulary would induce us to call right-wing. And the difficulty in reviewing M. Aron's book is that it is a book written for Frenchmen, about France, which sometimes seems to have amazingly little relevance to political realities and attitudes in England. In fact, for us the main value of the book may well lie in its demonstration of the deep political differences between the two countries—just as the main temptation of an English reviewer will be to thank God that we are not as Frenchmen are. It is a temptation which must be fiercely resisted. M. Aron's brilliant and absorbing book is an analytical castigation of the French Left—it is typical of his radical position that he does not think the French Right is *worth* attacking, except *en passant*. We should remind ourselves as we read it that a quite different but scarcely less devastating attack could be launched, from the same position of informed good-sense, against the *British* Left.

The first three chapters of this book are entitled respectively "The Myth of the Left," "The Myth of the Revolution," and "The Myth of the Proletariat." Of these the first has equal meaning both in France and in England; the third has little meaning in England, and the second almost none. English intellectuals of the Left scarcely think about the English—or even the French—revolutions of the past, and think still less about a cataclysmic social upheaval in the future. Even when I was a Communist, at a period when the word "revolution" was much on English lips, I remember that it was always mentioned with a certain embarrassment. We could not really *see* those barricades in Whitehall. And as for the proletariat, our usual attitude to that class has not been that it is lit up by some mystical virtue but that membership in it is a distressing and a limiting state which should be relieved by the dissolution of the particular social condition.

So I found that I agreed with M. Aron's second and third chapters, readily perceiving that the French Left clings too stubbornly to preconceptions which no longer have much meaning. But I did not agree with the first chapter of the book in which M. Aron tries to show that the very concepts of left-wing and right-wing have ceased to be useful ones. These are terms which we use quite as freely in England as they are used in France, and I have not been convinced that we are wrong to do so. And is it not very touching, and very typical of current French attitudes, that at one point in his deliberate attempts to confuse, and thus to destroy, these terms, M. Aron should write: "The true Left is that which continues faithfully to invoke, not liberty or equality, but fraternity —in other words, love"?

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For "Left" is, as we know, a "good" word in France which even self-confessed members of the Right like to include in the titles of their parliamentary parties. As a man of the Left myself, who cannot possibly review this book from the theoretical platform of finding much to be said for both attitudes, I accept M. Aron's definition of the "true Left." I happen to believe—and so does M. Aron—that the practice of social fraternity must involve a great deal of equality and a great deal of liberty. But it is morally sane to see these good things as means to the end of fraternity, rather than as ends in themselves. A raging egalitarianism can easily forget fraternity, in the manner of Procrustes. A raging libertarianism can easily forget that there is a degree of applied freedom beyond which the desolation of man is increased rather than reduced.

But the "true Left" needs to be further defined. We know perfectly well that there are men of the Right who feel a love for their fellowmen which is far more profound than anything that most of *us* have ever been able to achieve. Another virtue is needed to make the difference clear—and that is the virtue of hope. (What has bedevilled the Left for a generation has been the habit of adding Faith to the trinity—faith in Russia, faith in such specific social means as nationalisation, faith in Marxist or neo-Marxist attitudes to man and society.) In social action love without hope is not enough. The man of the "true Left" has not been abashed by the many and facile attacks on the concept of social progress. If he has lived, felt, and thought at all he will, indeed, be living by now in that state of "quiet desperation" which Thoreau saw to be our inevitable condition. He will know that personal life is tragic to its depths and that it is incurably tragic—which is not to say that it is *irredeemably* tragic. But he will also know that there are a great many causes of human distress which can be removed by a social action which is truly informed by love and hope.

On this issue M. Aron seems to be confused. At one point he writes that "the myth of the Left presupposes the myth of Progress" and shows, as he shows throughout his book, that he uses the word myth in its secondary and pejorative sense. But a little later he writes: "(Today) one may count the percentage of individual incomes which fall below the decent minimum, but one has only to compare the division of wealth and the standards of government of a century ago with those of today to realise that the growth of collective resources makes societies more egalitarian and less tyrannical." And a few pages later he declares that "one will never have finished trying to humanise community life." The explanation of what I believe to be M. Aron's confusion can be found in a coda to the first of these corrective statements: "They [societies] remain nonetheless subject to the old blind necessities of work and of power, and *ipso facto*, in the eyes of the optimists, unacceptable."

M. Aron has confused the Utopians—a dangerous and almost insane sect of the Left—with those who try to practise the necessary virtue of social hope. I suppose there are still such people as perfectionists—though I cannot remember ever to have met one—but it is my impression that this term has become no more than a useful sneer on the lips of right-wing cynics.

But the main burden of M. Aron's book is, of course, the charge of over-tenderness of the Left towards Communist régimes abroad and Communist parties at home. He does not waste his powder on Communists themselves, but he is greatly, and rightly, concerned with the fellow-traveller. Here, too, the British Left can justly claim that this is no longer among their major vices. But it is certainly true that the existence of a Communist state and International during the last forty years has been the major political and moral problem confronting the European and American Left. And it is equally true that the Left has constantly reacted to that problem with both confusion and dishonesty. Interminable arguments have been pursued about ends and means; about the permanent importance or temporary irrelevance of civil liberties and of common humanity; about the *direction*, as opposed to the evident present reality, of Communist society. The arguments continue, and it would be an odd kind of left-wing man who now feels at ease with them. We are anti-Communists? Of course; but do we regret the régimes of Chiang or of Pilsudski? The torment of the non-Communist Left lies here, and M. Aron acts legitimately in exposing that torment once again and in demonstrating, as clearly as I have ever seen it demonstrated, that the advent of Communism has been, for the Left, a cruel fall from the comparative innocence which they enjoyed at the time of the Dreyfus case. Communism has made us all guilty, because we cannot deny that Communism is a product of the old European Left, and we cannot, even now, wholly condemn all manifestations of Communism throughout the world.

But when this is admitted, as a source of embarrassment and distress to us which mere anti-Communism has proved inadequate to resolve, it still remains true that there is a general attitude to life and society which can usefully be described as left-wing, and another which can usefully be described as right-wing. Far from destroying this distinction, as he has tried to do

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throughout this book, M. Aron has simply revealed himself as a very pure, very convinced but very disillusioned Man of the Left.

In our own country the distinction becomes clearest when issues arise which are not distinctly concerned with the organisation of society. When there was a free vote in the House of Commons on the abolition of capital punishment nearly the whole of the Conservative Party voted for retention, nearly the whole of the Labour Party voted for abolition. The same thing happened some years ago in the case of flogging, and on such wholly non-political issues as the treatment of homosexuality it is well known that the Right strongly tends towards penal methods, the Left towards an attitude of mixed tolerance and therapy. There are few conservative pacifists. On racial questions it is the Labour Party which has normally stood for both fraternity and equality, the Right which has tended to preserve a belief in the natural inferiority of other races to our own.

Exceptions are very easy to find. But they should not be found where it is easiest to find them—namely among the rank and file supporters of both parties. Busmen have refused to work with West Indians and miners with Hungarian refugees. But M. Aron's book deals with the intellectual leaders of the Left and of the Right, and it is proper to confine ourselves to them. Even here the British Left has often betrayed that "true Left" of which M. Aron writes so passionately. The episode of Seretse Khama was an ugly one. Few men of the Left look back with much happiness at Mr. Bevin's activities in Palestine. Bureaucrats have often behaved with unpardonable presumption without arousing that libertarian ire in the Labour Party which is the proper left-wing reaction to such behaviour. The issue of nationalisation has sometimes come to resemble an end in itself, instead of a highly speculative means to the end of greater social fraternity. The still gross and excessive inequalities of our society seem to have been forgotten in a Labour Pensions Scheme which proposes to award pensions in proportion to the existing income structures of our highly unequal society. But all these errors or weaknesses are obvious fallings-away from an ordeal, just as the attitudes of Mr. Butler have persuaded the "true Right" that he is not a Tory at all.

If we examine that "true Right" and its ideals we can easily see the great difference of emphasis between the two attitudes to social and human value. Tradition; the organic society; individual initiative; national prestige—these are the proclaimed values of the genuine Tory. Both sides may believe that the values of the other can

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be subsumed under their own, but it is clear that a very different society will result from choosing to put one set before the other. The reason why there is not an *intractable* hostility between Left and Right in England is that both sides are happily united in their genuine passion for civil and political liberties. This was shown by the unanimity of disquiet in the House of Commons on the issue of telephone tapping.

Half-way through his book M. Aron sums up his own ideal for society in a sentence which is endlessly rich in implications: "The essential task [would be] to persuade men to acknowledge the superiority of others without any feeling of constraint and without any surrender of dignity." According to your nature, right-wing or left-wing, you will concentrate more on the main clause or more on the subsidiaries. It seems to me that the qualifications are gigantic and that men will never acknowledge the genuine superiority of others, in virtue, in intelligence, until all the false superiorities, of accent, of income, have been removed. And they cannot be removed without a radical reconstruction of our unjust society.

Philip Toynbee

MAN'S NEW ESTATE

Family and Kinship in East London. By MICHAEL YOUNG and PETER WILLMOTT. *Routledge & Kegan Paul.* 25s.

IN THEIR readable and provocative sociological study, Mr. Young and Mr. Willmott touch on what is probably the decisive British social change of today: the mass movement of the working class into the ever-spreading new suburbia. *Family and Kinship in East London*, the first volume issued by the Institute of Community Studies, sums up a comparative investigation undertaken by the authors into family life in the East End borough of Bethnal Green and on an L.C.C. housing estate in the green wilds of Essex to which, consequent upon slum clearance, many Bethnal Greeners have moved.

Such comparative studies are much needed. The Industrial Revolution a hundred years ago drew the population into the towns. The middle classes were the first to move out again, settling in what have today become inner suburbs. The working classes, following suit, are currently moving beyond these into outer rings of Council Estates. While the gain is obvious, some social dislocation has clearly also to be set against the gardens, garages, and gadgets of the new subtopia. In the East End, the British working classes had found their answer to slum surroundings in tightly-knit family loyalties and the democracy of the local pub and working men's club. Some of these ties do not easily survive on the Estate—this is what one might expect and what Mr. Young and Mr. Willmott, like others before them, confirm. As middle-class investigators, the authors were deeply impressed by the strength of family ties in Bethnal Green. The adult bond between working class mothers and married daughters, in particular, seemed to provide a sure basis for the three-generation family of grandparents, parents, and children, held together to the particular benefit of the very young and old. Out on the Estate, however, such links were often rudely torn across. With old people mostly absent, the typical family had shrunk to a two-tier structure. With possessions and fences, a new sense of competitive status and unfriendly isolation had crept in.

The sweeping conclusion of the authors is that the L.C.C. housing policy is basically wrong, and that Bethnal Greeners should be rehoused on the spot so that their family ties could be kept intact. This surely is too romantic —like the notion of the *Architectural Review* that the working classes should not crowd to beauty spots in motor coaches. The L.C.C. housing policy is, after all, only an aspect, indeed a product, of the social forces that are turning the working classes into owners of TV sets, washing machines, and cars, as well as of semi-detached houses and gardens. The trend is surely irresistible. The significant answer was that given to the investigators even by discontented families: that they would not think of returning to Bethnal Green because of the undisputed advantage of the new Estate for their children.

T. R. Fyvel

GETTING LOCKE RIGHT

John Locke, a Biography, by MAURICE CRANSTON. *Longmans,* 42s.

WE MAY be forgiven a sharp, indrawn whistle at the sight of this book. For Locke has become a trip-wire for the unwary, or a quagmire for the scholarly reputation: men disappear into this subject without leaving a trace. Almost everything said about him since the business of appreciating thinkers as historical influences began has turned out to be wrong. He was supposed to be a man unspotted by the dirty world of politics in which, surprisingly, he lived so much of his life. He was not: he was certainly more than close to the Popish Plot, a remarkably effective rehearsal for what happened under Senator McCarthy, and may even

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have been privy to an attempt to kidnap Charles II. He was supposed to have been a philosopher from Oxford, but it transpires that he did his philosophising as a man about town, about Restoration London. He was supposed to have written his work on government to rationalise the Revolution of 1688, but in fact he wrote it ten years earlier. He is supposed to have written it against Hobbes, but he didn't. And so on, and so on.

At the present time the aspiring doctors of philosophy are worming their way through a notable pile of documents in the Bodleian library; everything, but everything the retentive Locke had in his enormous desk when he died. And when the process has only just begun, when we are still a decade away from the first volume of Locke's letters, there appears a full-length biography of the man. It will have to be solid, we say to ourselves, it will have to be skilful, and cautious, and, most difficult of all in what is in the end *Ideengeschichte*, it will have to be well written. Otherwise he won't get away with it.

But he does. The work is there, eight years of it, in Oxford, in Holland, with microfilms, in conversation, and in correspondence with all the specialists and potential hatchet-men, patiently, accurately, judiciously done. It is skilful, skilful in its selection from the mass of materials and in the emphasis given to the subjects and the periods of Locke's life. Mr. Cranston has done well to dwell at length on Locke's early and middle life, which were very little known before the recent recovery of so many of his papers, and which is much more interesting than his later, successful years: men who have arrived tend to be boring. His cautiousness, where he found it advisable, is quite admirable, though he can be sharp and stimulating in his judgments when he chooses. And it is beautifully, almost brilliantly written: in some ways it is better than Locke himself deserves, or deserves from our generation where even competent writing on highly intellectual subjects is so rare.

He will, of course, not get through the crossfire without a scratch. He misses things now and again, and it might be said that even he is not entirely free from the conventions which grow up in thick-set hedges around a "great name," for successive generations of scholars to trim and trim again. Why, for example, is he so keen to show that the young Locke in his early, unpublished writings on politics was a Hobbesian fellow traveller? Is it only because everyone has always read Locke and Hobbes in double column? What is wanted is a determined attempt to see the men apart, admitting their interconnection only when the evidence makes it imperative, and it certainly does not here.

Mr. Cranston's book is, as we may expect, a

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philosopher's life of a great philosopher and it is a model of what can still be done in an intricate and difficult field by one man working alone. It is useful and diverting, rather than exciting and suggestive, but that is what is wanted.

Peter Laslett

HEROES AND VILLAINS

New Statesman Profiles. Introduced by KINGSLEY MARTIN. *Phoenix House.* 21s.

THIS book reproduces a series of short biographical sketches of living celebrities which appeared in the *New Statesman* between 1954 and 1957. Mr. Kingsley Martin explains in a preface that all the articles are based on information provided by people close to their respective subjects, that some "are the work of as many as half a dozen hands," and that most "were subjected to careful editorial revision before they appeared in the paper." Because it is thus a corporate enterprise, the book tells one at least as much about the *New Statesman* as it does about the celebrities concerned.

Who interests the *New Statesman*? Whom, and for what reasons, does the *New Statesman* admire? First, one notices that politicians are more numerous than artists, and that they are treated more kindly. Back-bench right-wing Tories, who might have been expected to excite some hostility, are most generously used; poets, apart from W. H. Auden, are scoffed at. While Randolph Churchill is seen as an almost Homeric figure, the greatest living woman poet is credited with nothing better than "yawps," "howls," and "screams." The book is not, however, consistently philistine, and most of the articles strike that note of brassy worldliness which is best described as "sophisticated." Of Peter Ustinov, for example, it is said that "Huntsman's know him well." Yet, as is usually the case with this sort of writing, there are several instances of the grossly naïve: as witness the suggestion that the Academie Française may elect Cyril Connolly to membership. Of one man it is said, in all seriousness, that his "fitted carpets" strike "the eye with pleasure." If the eye is thus ravished by fitted carpets, one cannot be astonished that the ear should be offended by Dame Edith Sitwell's *Façade*.

Sir William Haley is the subject of an especially malicious piece, mitigated, if that is the word, by the suggestion that a self-made man should not be judged as others are. Here one finds the worst example of the smear technique of assertion by denial: "But although much is made by old *Evening News* staff men of his [Haley's] disregard of any obligation but his own ambition, he seems to have been guilty of no more than is common in a highly competitive profession." A more innocent, if rather childish, instance is the sentence with which Sir Malcolm Sargent, another self-made man, is polished off: "It is probably not true, however, that he is contemplating a presentation of *Messiah* on ice."

Two, and only two men emerge from the book as faultless: Sir Kenneth Clark and A. S. Onassis. Should these names surprise one? They do not if one has grasped the values which inform the book. For Sir Kenneth exemplifies the principle that those who are born rich should devote their lives to culture and public service; Onassis the principle that those who are born poor should devote their lives to making money. Both embody the supreme ideal of conspicuous success. The portrait of Sir Kenneth is, I am sure, a true one, but that of Onassis is positively lackeyish. Not only is much made of the millionaire's "wit, erudition, and good taste" (though one is not told whether there are fitted carpets as well as Bouchers in his yacht), it is even claimed that he had "world opinion on his side" in the whaling dispute with the Norwegian government.

The attitude to Communism varies with the subject. In foreigners, notably Asian statesmen and Berthold Brecht, it is seen as something admirable, in Englishmen as folly. Arthur Koestler, who has, of course, changed his nationality, is mocked in turn for having been a Communist and for having ceased to be a Communist. Moderate socialism excites but small respect. The appraisal of Lord Attlee is one of the least charitable in the book; among other things Lord Attlee is accused of being interested in Asia without having any corresponding interest in Africa. And yet the reader will look in vain for any African among these *New Statesman* heroes: there are six Asians and four Americans; the rest are Europeans.

Maurice Cranston

THE INIMITABLE BOSWELL

Boswell in Search of a Wife. Edited by FRANK BRADY and FREDERICK A. POTTLE. *Heinemann.* 30s.

AS THE volumes of the Yale edition of the private papers of James Boswell accumulate, a perspective of the coxcomb biographer of

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Samuel Johnson as being himself one of the most peculiarly interesting and extraordinary men of the 18th century becomes the more positively apparent. He was perhaps not the most admirable, yet in spite of dog-beating, lechery, and paroxysms of stinginess, he was more forgivable than many, including that more famous contemporary self-confessor Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose abandonment of his children to an orphanage does not appear to have upset English moral susceptibilities quite as much as the episode (published in the last instalment of the saga) of Boswell maltreating a dog. Towards the end of that volume is to be found Boswell's record of the penetrating advice (did anybody ever ask for more, so faithfully preserve it, or regard it less?) offered him by his servant, Jacob Hänni: "You want to get to the bottom of things. Sir, I do not think you should marry."

But Boswell did marry: and in picking a wife, made an intuitively wise choice. Here, in the new volume of the Yale edition, collated with eminent skill by Frank Brady and Frederick Pottle from a porridge of Boswellian correspondence and journals, is a continuously readable account of the wild buffoonery of Boswell's courting. Perhaps only in the pages of James Joyce has the high comedy which is the sum of the private behaviour of the human being, with its farcical niaiseries, degradations, and humiliations, been thus spotlit. It may seem odd to bracket Boswell with Joyce, but apart from the fact that both men were great artists I cannot think of two other writers of prose so thoroughly and inextricably in love with the detail, process, and matter of life. Boswell's journals are not a work of art but they are the notebooks of an artist. In the present volume there is a passage which reads like a challenge to the author of *Ulysses*:

I find it impossible to put upon paper an exact journal of the life of man. External circumstances may be marked. But the variations within, the workings of reason and passion, and, what perhaps influences happiness most, the colourings of fancy, are too fleeting to be recorded. In short, so it is that I defy any man to write down anything like a perfect account of what he has been conscious during one day of his life, if in any degree of spirits.

Or again:

I observe continually how imperfectly, upon most occasions, words preserve our ideas.... In description we omit insensibly many little touches which give life to objects. With how small a speck does a painter give life to an eye! ... Certain looks of my dearest wife and certain tones of her voice, which I defy all the masters of language to show upon paper, have engaged my soul in an angelic manner. I find myself ready to write unintelligibly when I attempt to give any kind of idea of such subjects.

And like Joyce Boswell was an uncommon psychologist. It was not simply charm (a characteristic I cannot remember anyone ever having credited him with) or his indefatigable lionising or even his abundance of those qualities which most attract others—high vitality and great zest in living—which won Boswell, not merely the acquaintance, but the company and friendship of almost every worthwhile contemporary figure. For Boswell, if he could control himself less, by dint of his insatiable curiosity knew himself better than most people do: and to know oneself is to perceive others. Yet he could display inconceivable fatuity and deserve, as much as he invited, his frequent and monumental squashings by Dr. Johnson, as in the famous quiz about the baby in the castle. But it is also clear that Boswell knew what he was asking for yet would persist for the sake of eliciting an observation or a conversation—and what entertaining ones he obtained—to preserve. For under his egoism and peacockery Boswell had a fundamental natural humility which in the words of one of his relations made him prefer "being a showman to keeping a shop of his own." So long as his exhibits gleamed he did not mind too much the light in which he placed himself, nor would he be deterred by Gray's stinging phrase about the *Tour to Corsica*: "a dialogue between a green-goose and a hero."

What emerges in the present volume, among other matters, are the affinities between Johnson and Boswell which sustained the friendship between two otherwise antithetical beings. These were quite simply a consuming interest in people and a passionate love of London. "The sights of London again put me in high spirits," writes Boswell. "I cannot well account how it has had so strong an effect upon me since I could remember anything." To Boswell, the Master of New Inn Hall remarks: "It has been said that Mr. Johnson is a walking library. You are a walking collection of men." These should be set beside the passage in the *Life* about the last days of Dr. Johnson, in which Boswell seems almost to be talking about himself:

Such was his [Johnson's] intellectual ardour even at this time, that he said to one friend, "Sir, I look upon every day to be lost, in which I do not make a new acquaintance." ... And such was his love of London, so high a relish had he of its magnificent extent, and variety of intellectual attainment, that he languished when absent from it ... and therefore, although at Lichfield, surrounded with friends, who loved and revered him, and for whom he had a very sincere affection, he still found that such conversation as London affords, could be found nowhere else.

David Wright

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ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

MAX-POL FOUCHET was the founder and editor of the distinguished French literary monthly, *Fontaine*, which during the years 1939–1948 played a vital—and often heroic—rôle in sustaining French letters. He is the author of many archæological and ethnological studies, as well as works of literary criticism. In recent years, he has been prominent on French television as a commentator on cultural affairs. One of his programmes, a little while ago, on the subject of the death penalty, was suppressed by the authorities; but vigorous public protests soon caused it to be broadcast without change or censorship.

WAYLAND YOUNG has just completed a book on the Montesi Case which will be published this autumn by Faber and Faber. It will contain full accounts of both the trials referred to in his essay—that of the journalist Muto in 1954 for "publishing falsehoods," and the Great Trial at Venice this year of three men for "culpable homicide."

ELIZABETH MONTAGU *has provided us with the following* curriculum vitæ:

"Born 1917. Educated at private school. Trained Nurse at St. Thomas's Hospital, 1940–1947. Author of two novels, *Waiting for Camilla* (1952) and *The Small Corner* (1955). Another novel, *This Side of the Truth*, is due for publication by Heinemann this winter. Unmarried. Lives most of the year on a small farm in Dorset. At present engaged in writing a play."

GEORGE WATSON *writes of himself:*

"Aged 29. Born Brisbane, Australia. Read French and German at Queensland University and English at Trinity College, Oxford. Worked as Interpreter for five years at Council of Europe, Strasbourg. One of several Hon. Secs. of Committee of Writers and Publishers for European Co-operation (Paris), which sent me to Poland in May to tour universities, meet Polish writers and translators, and study their needs in Western books. I'm a literary historian and an active member of the Liberal Party. Have published an edition of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (Dent, 1956), and edited both the forthcoming *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, vol. V, and the recently published *The Unservile State: Essays in Liberty and Welfare* (Allen & Unwin), a symposium on the attitudes and policies of British Liberalism to which Jo Grimond, M.P., Elliott Dodds, Graham Hutton, Peter Wiles, and others have contributed. I'm just about to visit the United States for the first time as Visiting Lecturer in English at the University of Minnesota."

GEORGE STEINER, who was formerly on the staff of the *Economist*, is now at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Princeton, where he is preparing a study of the history of the novel as a literary form.... VINCENT BUCKLEY, one of Australia's most gifted young poets and critics, has been studying at St. Catherine's College, Cambridge.... The column, "From the Other Shore," is edited by LEOPOLD LABEDZ.

FORTHCOMING in *Encounter*:—Among the articles we shall present in the months to come are:

"Letter to a Young Man on the Make": *Kenneth Tynan.*
"Theatre and Living": *John Osborne.*
"The End of Colonialism": *Herbert Luthy.*
"Man v. Technics?": *Denis de Rougemont.*
"Thoughts on the Nude": *Lionel Trilling.*
"A Nostalgia for Misery": *Leslie A. Fiedler.*
"The Truth About Noddy": *Colin Welch.*
"Spanish Poetry Today": *J. M. Cohen.*
"Report on Yugoslavia": *Peter Wiles.*

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